

Mexican Life

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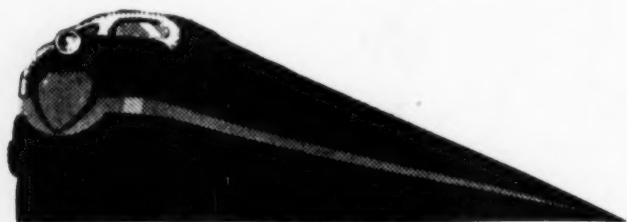
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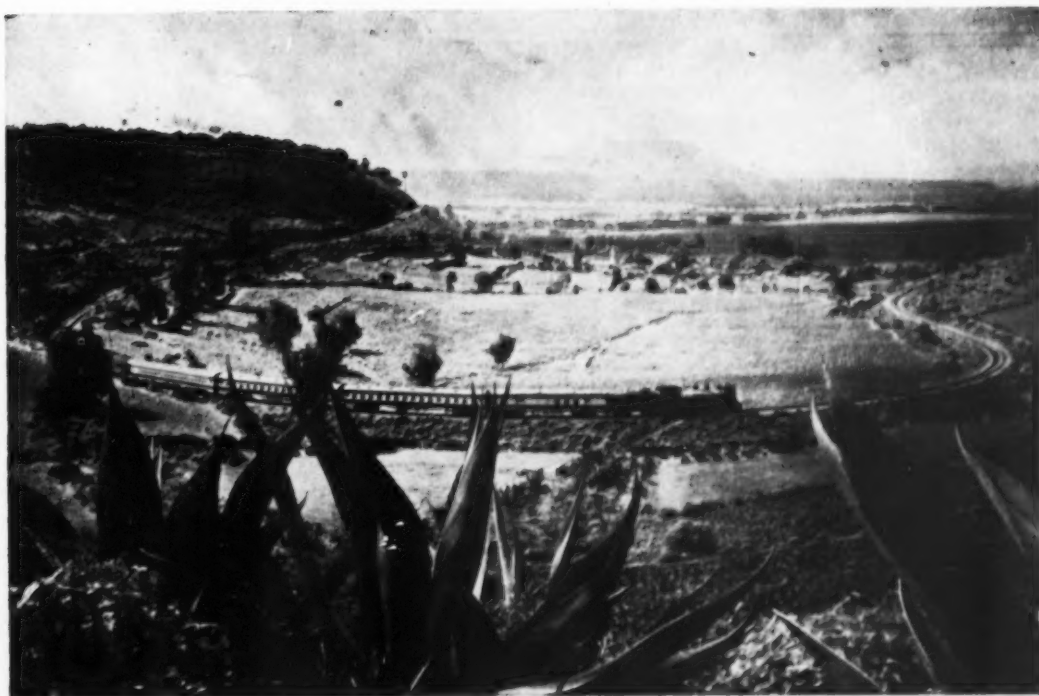
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Mexico's Monthly Review

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HOWARD S. PHILLIPS
EDITOR

The Meeting of two Presidents

THE meeting of Adolfo Ruiz Cortines, President of Mexico, and Dwight D. Eisenhower, President of the United States, which took place on the 19th of last month when they jointly inaugurated the Falcon Dam on the Rio Grande, served to reiterate the sincere and cordial friendship which exists between the two neighbor nations. The true significance of this meeting rests, however, not solely in the interchange of mutual esteem by these two national leaders but in the fact that it defined in practical terms the spirit of neighborly cooperation, of effective mutual helpfulness, which animates the policy of the two republics.

The Falcon Dam, representing a concerted effort to harness the forces of nature, and benefiting upon an equitable basis the interests of both nations, is situated at an equidistant point of 120 kilometers between Brownsville and Laredo, Texas and Nuevo Laredo and Matamoros in Mexico. Storing up the turbulent waters of the Rio Grande, which hitherto were lost in the Mexican Gulf, this dam will reclaim some 540,000 hectares of barren soil more or less equally distributed on both sides of the border. It will, moreover, safeguard agriculture from destructive floods, both in Texas and in Mexico, along a distance of 240 kilometers.

An artificial lake, 100 kilometers in length and from 11 to 18 in width, extending over a surface area of 280 square kilometers, has been created by this dam. This lake—the largest in Mexico—will not only serve as a reservoir of the water for irrigation and to control the river's currents so as to eliminate floods, but once it is stocked with fish, provided with swimming beaches and surrounded by lands of lush vegetation, will create a new, extensive and highly attractive recreation region on both sides of the border. The Falcon Dam will usher in a new era of growth and prosperity to such communities as Matamoros, Camargo, Reynosa and Nueva Ciudad Guerrero on the Mexican side, and Brownsville, MacAllen, Roma and Rio Grande in Texas.

Two hydro-electric power generating plants, one on each side of the border, have been constructed at the Falcon Dam, with a yearly capacity of 250 million kilowatt hours. This abundant supply of electric power will further stimulate the material development of the entire region.

The erection of the Falcon Dam and of the two power generating plants represents an investment of 47,312,000.00 dollars and nearly three years of work. Of this sum the United States contributed 27,724,832.00 dollars, or 58.6%, and Mexico 19,587,168.00, or 41.4%.

The distribution of costs was determined in the special international treaty that was drawn up for the realization of this project, in accordance with the respective amounts of water and the areas of irrigated land the dam will contribute to each country.

That the money the two countries have invested in this project represents a highly profitable investment is revealed in the reliable estimate that it will be fully recovered from the very outset through the greatly enhanced value of the land it has reclaimed, and that the gross monetary value of the crops these lands will produce over each three-year period will equal the sum of the total investment. Its full ultimate benefits are of course beyond calculation. Converting a desert into a verdant oasis, providing a new and rich source of food production and of prosperous livelihood for thousands of added inhabitants, and serving as an accomplished deed as well as a permanent symbol of international cooperation and amity, the Falcon Dam, whose completion was solemnized by the meeting of the two Presidents, defines an event of historical magnitude.

The speech delivered at the inaugural ceremony by President Ruiz Cortines contained the following high points: "The Falcon Dam symbolizes in a singular manner the desire of our countries to unite our forces in the sphere of collaboration the neighborhood imposes, in order to facilitate—and if possible to accelerate—the march of social and economic progress.

"I would like to think that this construction represents, above all, a fountain of human prosperity. We have contributed on both sides of the river to improve the life of a vast group of human beings—men, women and children, without distinction of nationality, race, language or religion."

The salient points in the speech by President Eisenhower offered praise to the free men of America, both sides of the boundary. "The typical citizen of North America," said the President, "is a lover of freedom... He looks to no government—neither his own or somebody else's—to chart his life. He knows that his own happiness and the healthy progress of his whole nation alike are to be won essentially by his own hands and his own brains... In all this, the man we salute today is the same—on whichever side of the border he lives. Citizen of Mexico or citizen of the United States, he is also citizen of the free world."

Thus the words uttered by the two Presidents have truthfully voiced the spirit and aspirations of the two nations they represent.

Fe

By Keith Fox

SE was a short Indian girl of fifteen. We had inquired for her at the little bakery shop across from our place in Colonia Juarez. When we told the dueña we needed a girl to wash our dishes once a day, she offered us her own criada. She called Fe and in a moment she appeared, her head bowed in timorous embarrassment. She could come only in the afternoon, the dueña said, and we asked her what we should pay her.

She came the next afternoon, just as she had promised. She said nothing and avoided attracting attention to herself. Every dish, every piece she handled separately and cautiously. Picking up a plate and setting it down again were two long processes requiring deliberation and care.

She dropped a cup to the floor and after the clattering noise had cut through the stillness she had created, she looked up sharply and quickly and demanded, "How much?"

There were not many dishes and another person would have washed them in thirty minutes. That first evening Fe spent at it an hour and a half, and the time increased each successive evening.

Fe liked us, I think, almost from the start, and we liked her. I once had a college roommate whose favorite expression was, "That guy's so mean he would step on baby chicks." I recalled that expression when I saw Fe; only the very meanest would step on her.

When we made a simple statement to Fe, such as "Estos frijoles son para mañana," her eyes would beam, "O-o-oh! ¡Para mañana!" as if we had divulged to her a great truth which she had long been seeking.

Occurrences which to us were without significance struck Fe as hilarious. Those were the only times

when she lost a kind of acute self-consciousness. She would throw up her hand and run screeching and screaming from the kitchen.

It was impossible to predict what was going to amuse her, but the necessity for predictions ceased because soon she began to laugh at nearly everything we said and did. We were taking a class in regional dancing at the "Escuela de Verano" and one evening we did a single step to ask her the name of it. No sooner had we lifted our toes than Fe made a quick turn and headed for a corner in the patio where she leaned against the wall, weak from laughter.

One afternoon while fumbling about the kitchen I touched the handle of a pot and jumped and swore when my fingers were burned. While I was searching for a pot holder, Fe reached over and with much less care than she would have used with a plate, picked up the pot with her fingers and stood holding it indifferently while she asked me where I wanted it. She looked at me quizzically and after a moment inquired whether I were feeling well.

We prided ourselves on our rapid acclimitization to Mexico. We learned the language with little difficulty and we found it easy to adjust to the customs. We took long walks through the city streets marveling at the dollhouse-like architecture. On one of these walks we passed a sidewalk vender of decorated clay pots containing orchid plants. We selected one with six orchids in full bloom and were able to bring the man to a price of four pesos. We looked at the plant, took turns carrying it, and judged how it would look against the blue in the apartment or against the rose. We tried again and again to elicit an aroma from it.

When we met our Mexican friends we would ask them how much we should have paid for the plant. We sat in feigned innocence of the level of prices while the Mexicans calculated in multiples of two or three or even five times the actual price. Then we would pride ourselves on our agility in the game. We wrote letters to our friends back home describing the grandeur of the plant.

Everyday we would discuss the plant with Fe. We contemplated the change in color of the blossoms, how long it would be until one fell off, whether it looked better sitting on the table in the center or over by the window. Or perhaps it looked nicest on the desk?

Fe, I am afraid, was not impressed. If we had dared to look a bit candidly at the time, we might have discovered that to her it was for all the world only another ordinary orchid plant. But she understood our devotion to it and never laughed at us about that. At times I think she was almost willing to believe it did have some extraordinary quality.

One afternoon, just after she had arrived, Fe, with the strained courtesy and caution that make for awkwardness, knocked the plant off a table and broke the pot.

I have been present at the death of many people and I can remember vividly the funeral services I attended as a child. I can even remember the time when I was five and had to be taken outside the village church because the atmosphere of muffled sobbing was too much for me. But none of these things compares with Fe's reaction the day she broke the pot.

We were helpless. We did not know what to do or what to say, but that evening when she left we

Continued on page 66



Oil.

By Campa Rivera.



Ruins at Uxmal. Photo.

Photo. By Mary Saint Albans.

The Riddle of the Mayas

By Stewart J. Walpole

OWING to the efforts of several universities and foundations in the United States, and in a large part to Mexican government cooperation, the romantic story of a relatively advanced civilization, which thrived before the exploration of the New World, is slowly being unravelled. One does not need to travel to Egypt or to Mesopotamia to find the mute remains of ancient habitation. The Americas have their own monuments to antiquity.

In the peninsula of Yucatan, Mexico, at the sacred city of Chichen Itza, archaeologists have uncovered from jungle vegetation magnificent ruined build-

ings of the Mayas, who, in ancient times, occupied much of Yucatan, large portions of Guatemala, and all of the British Honduras.

The time of Christ coincides with the period at which the earliest high culture began to flourish in the New World. The chronology of Mayan Empire development suggested by Dr. Sylvanus Morley divides the history of the Mayan race into eight periods, which are not well defined since they are continuous, but they can be taken as representing trends in various phases of culture.

The following tabulation of the periods will make the chronology clear:

I—Migratory Period	100 B.C.—200 A.D.
II—Golden Age or Old Empire	200 B.C.—600 A.D.
III—Colonization Period	450 B.C.—700 A.D.
IV—Transitional Period	700 B.C.—1000 A.D.
V—Renaissance or League Period	1000 B.C.—1200 A.D.
VI—Period of Toltec Mercenaries	1200 B.C.—1450 A.D.
VII—Disintegration	1450 B.C.—1541 A.D.
VIII—Wars with Spain	1541 B.C.—1697 A.D.

I—The Migratory Period: This was a prehistoric era during which the embryo of the Mayan civilization developed. Intricate glyphs emerged from obscure origins and were elaborated into the complex symbols which are found today preserved on many monuments and buildings.

II—The Golden Age: Many cities. Art flourished and was marked by excessive use of ornamentation. Life was chiefly occupied with building craftsmanship and agricultural pursuits which formed a basis for religious rites conducted by priests, who maintained and interpreted astronomical and calendric records. The Old Empire blended into:

III.—The Colonization Period—Which is important, chiefly because it marked the beginning of documentary history and important changes in the calendric system. Unrest finally led to a wholesale migration northward.

IV.—The Transitional Period—Migration continued toward Chakanputum. The flourishing cities of Chichen-Itza, Uxmal, and Mayapan formed a confederation about the year 1000 A.D., called the League of Mayapan. This consolidation marked the inauguration of a new empire.

V—The Renaissance—The people, once settled, were peaceful for many years. Old cities obliterated and forgotten, new ones built on the same sites, and elsewhere. The population of Chichen Itza is estimated to have reached 100,000 at this time. Each city of the League had a ruling family. The administration of government affairs was performed well. Crimes, especially breaches of a moral code, were defined, and punishment inflicted.

VI.—Period of Toltec Mercenaries—The ruler of the city of Mayapan, eager to extend the boundaries of his territory, hired mercenary soldiers, the semi-barbaric Toltecs from Mexico. This move cost him the Sovereignty of Chichen, which he was forced to yield to the Toltecs in payment for their services. Under these people, Chichen witnessed its final period of architectural development, which was characterized by serpent columns, ball courts, atlantean supports, and addiction to barbaric practices. About the year 1450, internecine strife brought this civilization to an end.

VII.—Period of Disintegration—After two centuries the League of Mayapan became extinct. With the abolition of strong, centralized government, scores of weak states sprang up. Wars were frequent, and many cities were destroyed and abandoned. New cities were founded, and the Itzas withdrew to the southwest.

VIII—The Period of Spanish Wars—The knell to Mayan civilization was sounded when the Spaniards invaded the New World in search of gold, and under the leadership of generals and priests vandalized the country. It was this plundering by the Spanish conquistadores which has left the story of the Mayas largely a mystery. Nearly all written records were destroyed; there remains only the beautiful, silent majesty of their temples and monuments, and their descendants are ignorant of their own genealogy!

Much of our present knowledge of the social structure of the Mayan community and the habits of the

Mayas has been acquired from a study of the meagre records left by the Spaniards. Written accounts and pictures indicate that the men dressed in decorated loin cloths and capes which hung from their shoulders. Sandals made from hemp or leather completed the costume. Persons of high rank displayed more elaborate clothing; some of these wore wooden helmets, sprouting gorgeous colored feathers; others rich mantles of tiger skin; many possessed ornamental jewelry of gold and jade. Tattooing was commonly practiced and occasionally, they painted themselves all red.

The women were attired in a simple petticoat with an additional covering for the breasts. They wore the hair long, sometimes braided, tattooed their bodies abundantly, and modestly painted their bodies red with the exception of their faces. Sweet gums and perfumes were employed to increase their charms, and their beauty was enhanced by filing the front teeth to sharp points.

Mayan culture was made possible by the agricultural conquest of Yucatan. The chief crop was maize, main source of practically all sustenance. Grain not used immediately, was stored. Labor was communal; groups of men cooperating at each "farm" and working together on the clearing and burning, sowing and reaping.

* * *

The frequent wars into which the Mayas were plunged, gave rise to a semblance of military organization. An army was commanded by two generals, one hereditary, the other elective for a period of three years. The elective chieftain was greatly venerated, was obliged to refrain from intercourse with women and to hold himself aloof from all. Each village supported a small group of chosen men, which formed a standing army, but in times of stress whole communities were called to defense. The Mayas used such weapons as wooden bows and arrows tipped with obsidian or bone, lances with flint tips, and bludgeons. Their armor consisted of leather shields and suits of two layers of cotton having salt or sand packed between the layers. Wrist guards, anklets, and leggings were worn for more complete protection.

Military tactics during warfare proceeded as follows:

The troops stole out of the city and fell upon the enemy with hideous cries. Barricades of stone and bushes were erected on the defensive side while archers attempted to repulse the attack. After the battle the victors mutilated the bodies of the slain, cutting out the jawbones and cleaning them of flesh to use for bracelets. The spoils of war were offered as sacrifices, and there was no better gift to the gods than a captured chief. The captives were enslaved and it was the conquerors' object to take as many prisoners as possible.

The family was a highly organized unit of Mayan society. Women were chaste and modest. Twenty years was considered marriageable age, although children were often affianced at an early age. Courtship was unlike the relatively simple process of the twentieth century, in that it was considered bad manners for a youth or his father to have anything to do with

arranging a marriage. When a young man reached the age of twenty, a professional matchmaker negotiated with the parents of the prospective bride for a dowry, to be paid by the young man's father. On the day of the wedding, friends and relatives gathered at the home of the bridegroom for a feast, at which a priest married the betrothed couple.

After the wedding the husband affiliated with the home of the wife's parents to work for his board for five or six years and thereafter becomes an individualist. If his industry was not satisfactory, he was driven out, and the marriage was annulled. Widows and widowers married without ceremony, a visit at the home of the prospective wife and a dinner at her house being sufficient to establish their relationship. The Mayas were of a jealous nature, consequently divorce was frequent. In case of marital incompatibility husband and wife merely separated, the woman taking the daughters, and the man, the sons. However, in spite of its frequency, divorce was condemned by the respectable members of the community, and it is a curious thing that polygamy was unknown to this race.

* * *

Little is known about the government of the Mayan states. Cities were under the rule of hereditary chiefs, who advised their heirs as to the duties of office. The rulers settled all lawsuits and had trusted lieutenants who helped them to regulate the other affairs of the domain. The chief frequently travelled to other cities on what we call "good will tours," where he was royalty feted. The second ranking officer took charge of the drum which called the people to dances and to battle and to other important public events. Succession to these offices was usually by primogeniture, provided the first born was suited to his prospective position.

In the administration of justice, the Mayas had a highly developed sense of fairness; malicious crimes were atoned for by bloodshed; the punishment of a murderer was left to discretion of the relatives of the deceased, who could take the murderer's life or exact an indemnity as they chose; a thief was obliged to make restitution for whatever he had stolen; male adulterers were tied to a post and beaten to death, but the guilty woman was deemed punished sufficiently by her infamous conduct.

The Mayas were apparently much given to pleasure. Their greatest recreations were in dances, and feasts, which usually developed into orgies. After dining, beautiful girls passed wine to the guests until all were drunk, whereupon their wives (who were not permitted to attend the feasts) came to take their husbands home. Each guest, on leaving received a handsome vase and a pedestal with a cloth cover.

The Mayan "national sport" was a ball game something like a combination of hand-ball and basketball. The game was probably played with a crude rubber ball between two long walls in the center of which, on each side, was a stone ring about two feet in internal diameter. The object of the game was to drive the ball through the ring. Skilled players were allowed to strike the ball only with the hip. A clear goal was a rarity, and a successful scorer received special honors.

The Mayas like most primitive people were extremely religious. Religion was a motive for all their work and art. Their religion was polytheistic, and although there were only a few gods at first, the tendency was to absorb more and more deities. The chief god was Itzamna (who had several names), the Creator of man and the founder of Mayan Civilization, first priest, inventor of writing; and the great healer.

Continued on page 62



Temple at Chichén Itzá.

Photo. By Mary Saint Albans.



A typically attired woman of the Huasteca Potosina.

Huasteca Potosina

By Ramón Veldiosera
Illustrated by the Author

ONE OF the most interesting and colorful regions in Mexico is that which comprises the Huasteca Potosina, or the small section of the ample zone where in times bygone flourished the great Huasteca culture, and which today extends over the states of Tamaulipas, San Luis Potosí, Hidalgo and Veracruz. The names of the towns found in this zone always begin with the syllable "Tam," which in the native language signifies "place." Thus, in traveling through this zone, one visits such communities as Tampamolón, Tameanhuitz, Tampico, Tameco, Tamuín, Tamiahua and Tamoanchán. The latter is the place where according to scientifically substantiated legends the culture of maíz was originally evolved on this continent.

Hidden in the mountains amid a profuse vegetation and clustering at the banks of rippling rivulets, the towns of the Huasteca Potosina are peopled by a peaceful folk who tend their land, growing corn, coffee, yams, bananas, beans and chile, which, supplemented with deer and game fowl, provide their daily food.

The men in this region wear white garments, while the women are adorned in embroidered huipiles with singularly beautiful designs which combine fantastic birds with fanciful flora, doubtlessly evoked by the sights along the paths of this lush country trod by these handsome native women, bearing earthen jars on their heads and sacks over their shoulders.

In the Huasteca Potosina there are various churches which stand atop ancient pyramids, and that were built with the stones removed from these pyramids. The people come to these churches and pray in their native language, some times to the bearded effigies of Hispanic origin and some times to the idols portraying older deities which lie buried behind the altars.

For Mexico is like that. It is an incredible amalgam of the past and the present, to which the enduring image of the profane and sacred lend its unique personality.



Daily Chores.



Along the trail in the Huasteca Potosina.



At a rancheria.

Mexico in Social Security

By Efraín Klériga

AT THE Eleventh General Assembly of the International Association of Social Security, which was held from the 6th to the 12th of last September at the Chaillot Palace in Paris, Mexico was accorded a place of high distinction. At the conclusion of the sessions, the two hundred and thirty delegates, representing millions of insured persons in forty countries of the world's five continents, expressed their praise and approval of this country's administration of social security in electing by unanimous vote Lic. Antonio Ortiz Mena, Director of the Mexican Institute of Social Security, to the high post of Vice-President of the above Association for the period 1953-1955. This election was accompanied by stormy applause.

The high honor granted to Mexico by this assembly is undoubtedly significant. The International Association of Social Security is a specialized body whose main objective is to "internationally coordinate and intensify the efforts toward, extension, defense and technical and administrative perfection of social security." Pursuing this objective, the I.A.S.S., which was founded on October 4th of 1927 under the auspices of I.O.L. (International Office of Labor), joins "not only the institutes of social security, the depositaries and mutualities of social security, but also the ministerial departments which administer one or various branches of social security." This association carries out periodical assemblies of its members, which make possible an interchange of information as well as of experiences gathered in the field of social security, providing an opportunity for discussion and solution of practical problems.

One hundred and two organizations of social security from all over the world were represented through delegations at the assembly of Paris, including some countries, such as Japan, for the first time. The delegates discussed important issues and exposed new problems and experiences. Of the issues discussed, those which merited special attention were: "Recent Developments in the Field of Social Security," "Family Assignments," and "Relations Between the Institutions of Social Security and the Medical Corps." Of the exposed problems the more outstanding were those dealing with the extension of social security to new population sectors, such as the peasantry, nomadic groups, and other social groups among the dependent nations. Mexico presented a comprehensive study on the subject of "Evaluation of Invalidism," which the assembly regarded as yet another proof of the extent of progress achieved by Mexico and of the dynamic manner in which its Government confronts the most difficult problems of social security.

* * *

It was not by mere accident or through a gesture of simple courtesy that Mexico and its Government have been accorded this recognition by the highest authorities in the realm of social security. In its international representation this country occupies a worthy and responsible place. In the realm of world relations among nations it sponsors the same goals which are being realized within its frontiers. Here, with the arms of labor, Mexico affirms itself as a nation, with respect for all endeavours, in protection of all its citizens and in defense of democratic norms. The

ideals Mexico pursues at home it also carries abroad. For this reason the delegates at the assembly in Paris could not fail to acknowledge this country's distinguished position in the field of social security.

Rising above the grave crisis affecting the world—revealed in the low living standards of the masses, in the limited resources of the State whereby to attend the needs of the workers, and in the waste of the wealth of nations in preparation for aggression or war—Mexico and its Government have lent special concern to the task of meeting the needs of its people, of seeking to elevate its standards of living, utilizing in this aim the best means which a nation existing in peace may possess. These aspirations of its people and Government imbue its administration of social security. And these were inscribed on the banners Mexico unfurled at the Chaillot Palace of the City of Light. For this it has earned international applause and the grateful recognition of its entire population.

* * *

The Mexican delegates at the Eleventh Assembly of the I.A.S.S. have introduced as well as gathered numerous important issues and experiences. The delegation devoted special study to everything related to the extension of our regime of social security to rural sectors and agricultural workers, which comprise the bulk of our population and the main phase of our national productive activities. This special attention was due to a specific reason.

The Law of Social Security in its present scope functions only in the larger communities and provides for the country's industrial employees. This limitation of the law does not, however, imply evasion of responsibilities or neglect of duty. It more truly defines high responsibility in the fulfillment of duty, as well as a sound technical and scientific approach. Each step that has been made to date in the regime of Mexico's social security has been cautious and firm, and has been based on reality and on an exact knowledge of the problem. In this way the Mexican Institute of Social Security has first of all taken care of the needs of the Federal District, later extended its function to the other important cities of the Republic, and finally reached the smallest towns and industrial centers. In the same way it will eventually reach the field, the men who till the soil of Mexico, among whom, incidentally, the ideal of the Revolution was born, the ideal which made possible our regime of social security and lent our nation a place of eminence before all the countries of the world. The Mexican delegation at the assembly in Paris has expressed this desire, and has set its course in keeping with this desire upon its return to this country. Thereby it has traced an obligation which must be fulfilled. Once the indispensable studies of the experiences and technical information gathered at the assembly are finished, the Mexican Institute of Social Security, following its Director's pledge, in approaching the native tiller in the field, will have fulfilled one of the best, if not the best, stages in the development of social security in Mexico.



Wood Engraving.

By Sue Jean Hill.

The Great Varón

By Charles V. Craig

THE two beautiful old towns of Cuernavaca and Taxco on the Mexico City-Acapulco highway owe much of their interest to the doings of Jose de la Borda. And yet, apart from a statement in the guide books that Borda "amassed" a mining fortune of forty million pesos (erroneous) and a portrait (unattractive) in the National Gallery, there is little easily available information about this man, who built the magnificent Borda Gardens in the one town and the splendid parish church in the other and whose son built the now ruined church of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Borda is indeed a legend in Taxco especially, but rather a vague one. He was widely credited with being a Varón and a Phoenix, but it seems that a Varón is nothing in particular but a respectable man and there is of course some question as to whether a Phoenix is even a respectable bird. The eighteenth century preoccupation with the idiotic fable of the Phoenix is diffi-

cult to understand, although it does include a resurrection of sorts. Among a few others, Hernan Cortes, the Conqueror, was a Phoenix, although there was no resurrection for the civilization he burned up along with himself. However, it was very desirable to be a Phoenix, if one could get the hang of it.

* * *

Jose de la Borda was one of a small group of mining men who, during the eighteenth century, boosted the silver production of New Spain by a good five-fold, beneficently inflating all the currencies of Europe and largely supplying the specie foundation for the industrial revolution. Of course none of them suspected that they were doing anything so significant, but many of them, poor initially, became immensely wealthy, and a number were ennobled, for a consider-

ation, by the King of Spain. A couple of battleships of the line tactfully presented to His Majesty might bring forth a resounding hereditary title, such as was held by the Counts of Regla. More significant is the fact that these Horatio Alger noblemen were in general humane and decent men and their history forms a pleasant page in a dark and ominous book.

Jose de la Borda never acquired a title, but he made (and largely lost) three great fortunes—perhaps forty million dollars in all. Coming up three times is as rare among miners as among drowners! He also sparked an exciting revival in three of the important old mining districts of New Spain, was much the softest touch in the Americas, and made some of the most extraordinary statements ever attributed to a sane and practical man. He was as rococo as the architecture of his church.

In evaluating the mining accomplishments of New Spain it must be remembered that they were achieved almost with bare hands; no fuel, no power, and no machinery to speak of, little knowledge of geology, chemistry or metallurgy, not even any decent explosives. Quite a little research is necessary before understanding how they could possibly have carried on operations which would be of a respectable size today. In a normally uninventive people necessity proved to be the mother of invention in mining, though a rather barren parent otherwise. The crude skills acquired actually caused a temporary relaxation of the pressures of an insistent scarcity economy and created a veritable Silver Age in parts of New Spain.

Jose de la Borda was of French extraction, his real name being Joseph le Borde. One of his best friends, Father Jimenez y Frias, demurely stated that "his origin was unknown" but that he came to Taxco when sixteen, the eighteenth century then being of a similar age. We know absolutely nothing about those first sixteen years and very little about his next twenty-five except that he was married at the age of twenty, his wife dying six years later after giving birth to a son, Ramon, and a daughter, Teresa. If we knew how Borda, a foreigner, destitute, unknown and presumably uneducated, managed to acquire enough capital and know-how during this time to become a successful small-scale mine operator the record might dwarf his later accomplishments, substantial as they were. The Church made no claim of having aided him materially during those formative years.

We do know about a number of factors that greatly favored the poor silver miners of New Spain. Theoretically, all the mines belonged to the King but the Habsburg kings of the sixteenth century realized that the King could not afford to work the mines himself and passed this basic truth on to the Bourbon kings of the eighteenth century, it only becoming lost by some modern economists. Of course private parties could not always afford to work the mines either, but any misadventures on their part did not necessarily affect the solvency of the colony or of the Crown. If one could no longer afford to work his mine it became open to pre-emption by any free man, and most men were now free. Win or lose, the King and his cohorts took approximately one-sixth of all the gold and silver produced and—let the mine operator alone! Seldom has a more inefficient government with more selfish motives pursued a more beneficent policy. Mining booms proliferated and lasted for decades.

But the greatest boon for the poor silver miner was the "patio" process for the cold amalgamation of silver ores. First applied in Pachuca in the middle of the sixteenth century, it was utilized without any significant change or improvement whatever until the cyanide process came along in the early years of the twentieth century! It is entitled to some sort of a first prize among unalterable institutions unless you are

going to include human credulity and the like in the competition. In this process the rock was finely ground, mixed with salt, copper sulphate and quicksilver and spread in the great stone-flagged yards or "patios" still to be seen throughout Mexico. There it was tramped upon and mixed by the feet of hundreds of mules driven around in endless circles for weeks before the silver amalgam was washed. The process was slow, expensive, and cruel but it got the silver—got nearly all of it. It also sometimes recovered balls of silver amalgam weighing ten pounds from the stomachs of dead mules who had incautiously imbibed the amalgam along with the tasty salt water! It all meant that Borda and his friends could sell their silver ore, when they had any, to established "patios" throughout New Spain. The only catch was that, to be profitable, the ore sold to the "patios" had to contain nearly fifty ounces of silver to the ton and that silver ore in New Spain and elsewhere has a little habit of not containing fifty ounces per ton, except in spots and "pockets." Borda's ore was more likely to run twenty ounces per ton "in place" and it was necessary for him to hire a multiplicity of strong brown hands to break the rock to the size of walnuts and sort out the better pieces which could be sold. The rejects from this process, often eighty percent of the whole, were usually so low in value that they have defied exploitation to this day, and make up most of the old mine dumps and fillings now, throughout Mexico. Mexico is of course, New Spain minus certain oddments such as California, Texas and Central America.

* * *

In the year 1743 Jose de la Borda was in Talpujahua, high in the hills north-west of Taxco, where he was sole owner and operator of the "La Cañada" mine, then very much in bonanza. Why he went to Talpujahua in the first place we do not know. Perhaps he thought the grass would be greener over the mountains, and by rights it should have been pure chlorophyll after that particular and precipitous hundred-mile ride. Probably he was able to swing a better proposition in that "retired" situation with his limited means than would have been possible in Taxco. We really do not know very much about the "La Cañada" operation. One gorgeously unreliable authority states that he took out thirty million pesos. The peso then had a value roughly equivalent to that of an ounce of silver or that of a United States dollar before the demonitization of silver. Alexander Humboldt, famous German traveler and savant and intimate of Goethe and all the great of Europe was usually very chatty and accurate about such things, but he does not hazard a guess as to the amount of Borda's winnings in this mine. Probably we are safe in assuming that he made a profit of several millions of pesos and that he was very glad to get back to sunny Taxco after pensioning off all the poor friars and nuns that he could find on the cold hillsides near the "La Cañada."

Jose de la Borda now had ample money and experience with which to attack the difficult mines in the Taxco district. The Taxco silver mines did not contain extensive and wide bodies of rich ore, such as were found, for instance, in the Veta Madre or Mother Vein of Guanajuato. The Taxco veins were more like wayward step-daughters, narrow and treacherous, the good ore jumping from hanging-wall to foot-wall and disappearing altogether in a light-hearted fashion. Sometimes there would be a succession of balls, six inches or more in diameter, concocted of almost pure ruby silver. These were the happy answer to a miner's prayer, but there was always the danger that you might spend all you made in such a rich spot before finding another in that particular mine. Borda

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Broken Dishes

By Dane Chandos

SUPPOSE Rendel's interpretation of Mr. Humpel, and, more especially, the latter's evident satisfaction with the portrait, should have done something to prepare me for the bombshell that arrived one morning with my breakfast. There was some whispering outside my door, and I could just hear the voices of Apolonia and Cayetano in the kitchen, raised in fierce discussion. Nieves brought in my coffee, saying good morning as usual but carefully avoiding my eye and fixing her own gaze on the note beside my plate as if she were trying by sheer concentration to divine its contents.

"Sir! I write to advise, since the little Paz is too modest to say it herself, that she may not work more as service-maiden, for she is my Bride. Before many days, I bid you as honored guest to the wedding which will be in Guadalajara. To many it can appear the old man's folly, yet my heart is in the Maytime. Will you be so kind to tend my papagays while the wedding journey, which we think to make with bus to the Capital? I thank you."

I went straight to Mr. Humpel's bungalow to congratulate him. Paz was there, sitting on the edge of a chair and blushing under the pale rosewood of her skin. There, too, were her parents and a number of other relatives.

"Now that we are promised, the old ones will not leave us," said Mr. Humpel cheerfully. "It is their custom."

For days Ajijie buzzed with the news. I had grown fond of Mr. Humpel, and there was no one in the village but had a soft spot in his heart for Paz; yet the news gave me considerable misgiving, shared, I thought, by Cayetano.

"Her life will now be most secure—" he paused. "You forgive me, señor, I do not mean disrespect, but in the place of Primitivo the Señor of the Oven, though a most kind gentleman, will be like an ancient mule in the harness of a fine young horse."

The other servants and, indeed, most of the women of Ajijie looked at Paz as if she were transfigured.

"It is very good for her," said Aurora, "very good. And think how nice is the life of a young widow—rich."

The foreigners prophesied disaster, and one woman went so far as to call on Mr. Humpel and tell him exactly what would happen.

"She asks how I will see many brown babies, perhaps not by me fathered," he told me later. "But I answered I will no babies for I wish not to plant my issue forth of mixed, and I shoed her. Na, na, I am old and the little Narciso is for me family enough."

I did not know Mr. Humpel's eventual plans, but I thought it likely that, in view of the old man's evident intention to accommodate the bulk of Paz's fa-



Oil.

By Margarita Robledo.

mily, he would be planning to leave me. To make matters worse, a few days later Nieves announced that she would be leaving for good within a month. She had insensibly become head housemaid, instructing all new maids in their duties, and saving me much trouble. But for many years she had been contributing from her wages toward the education of her brother as a priest, and now at last, in June, he was to be ordained. It is a social step up to have a brother in the priesthood, and it had always been her dream to keep house for him. In fact, she was going to be a lady, the sister of the padre, a person of importance in any village. And even though she had heard that he was to be sent to Campeche, which, so they told her, was full of dangerous serpents, she was already making eager preparations.

* * *

Suddenly it seemed as it sometimes does in Mexico that everything was conspiring to make life disagreeable. Day by day the weather grew hotter, the air dustier, and tempers more uneven. My next problem was Apolonia. She had never been really satisfactory, spending far too little time in the kitchen and trying to do everybody's job but her own. Furthermore, of all the things she could do, she excelled least in cooking. She smashed something every day, she had a heavy hand with seasoning, and I could never make her see the advantage of keeping a separate frying pan for omelets.

"I washed the pan with ashes, señor," she would say brightly, "and they were hot, hot and red from the fire. But it still smells of fish, doesn't it? And don't I throw a little coriander into the wet soup of liver?"

I said I thought liver had enough flavor of its own.

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Patterns of Old City

By Howard S. Phillips

TURNING WHEELS

BY THE time the bus pushed its way through the jumble of downtown streets, traversed the length of the suburban boulevard, passed the two bronze sentinels posed atop their pedestals in lonely vigil over outskirt wastes, and commenced to climb the winding highway through the foothills, Boyd's mind gradually recovered a state of calm. His thoughts that had been confused for days now assumed a coherent sequence. Reality recovered form and shape. He was stirred by a new eagerness, by an anticipation of discovery, of rediscovery and new beginnings. Probing this recovered buoyancy he recalled that he had experienced similar sensations on foregone journeys, that physical motion, the awareness of turning wheels, accelerated his mental motion, aroused avidity, spurred him emotionally, filled him with an ambivalent feeling of sadness and cheer at the reality he abandoned behind and the enigma which lay ahead. Essentially, he thought, I am a tramp. There is a streak of the nomad in me, and placeness is my only tangible place.

I will have less than fifty dollars, he mused, by the time I reach New York. I will be virtually on the bum. There will be the ordeal of wangling advances, of mooching petty loans, of keeping afloat till I land something. I'll be hitting the big town slam-bang in December. It'll be tough to endure the cold after all these months in Cuernavaca. My blood has run thin, has gone tepid, in the balmy sub-tropics. I've grown indolent and soft. Damn good thing I still have that overcoat.

These thoughts passed through his mind without causing him worry or fear. The problems he faced did not loom as a menace. Things, he knew, would take care of themselves. He would scramble through somehow. His immediate future might be troublesome and uncertain, but he looked forward to it serenely, even eagerly—the hazard, the mystery of either gain or loss which lay ahead exhilarated him; it kindled him with the excitement of a gambler who is watching a race upon which he had staked his final coin.

He knew that his future was a trying ordeal, but he also knew that his past had been lived out to a definite end, that it was a totally liquidated episode, that whatever rewarding substance it might have had was now completely exhausted and dead, and that to go away from it now, to turn his back to it, yes, even to obliterate it from his mind was the only logical, the only feasible thing he could do. Whether the future bore good or ill, it was a new beginning, and that in itself was good.

Sitting in this bus, his eyes absentmindedly following the panorama unwinding along the roadside, the thought that for at least a week he would be sitting like this in speeding busses, that there was yet a week's interim between two realities, so many days ahead to think, to plan, to prepare himself for this new beginning, brought him assurance and comfort. It was a good thing, he thought, that his shortage of funds had compelled him to make this long journey by bus.

Yes, he said to himself. That's the way to do it. You come to a place and you stay a while; stay long enough to apparently become part of it. You fall in with a crowd of people, get to know them pretty well.

Everybody is friendly, open and frank, and you yourself are not a cagy or mysterious kind of a guy: you like to get on with people; so they get to know you pretty well too, and probably figure that you'll just hang around the place, become a fixture, a denizen. Then suddenly you quietly pack up and blow. You don't stop to explain or to say goodbye—it's all a kind of corny business anyway—; you just sort of vanish. And then they'll probably say, what the hell happened to Harry? Gone. Blew out. Maybe they'll think I left some unpaid bills or something. Well, it doesn't really matter. They will not say it, they will probably not even comprehend it, but inside they'll resent my unceremonious departure—they'll resent the fact that I walked out on them. For whatever it is they find in Cuernavaca, whatever it is that holds them there, like misery, it requires company.

He wondered what had actually impelled him to make this abrupt departure. Surely, he thought, it was not merely because of my sadly depleted bank account. He could always, if it came to that, wire Anatole, the good old Anatole Freedman with whom ostensibly and for almost two years he was collaborating on a play. Or he could pound out a few stories and peddle them somewhere. As it is, ever since he wound up the affair with Keith, signed off all his royalties to her, let her strip him clean to avoid the future annoyance of alimony, paid off the lawyer and all that, he has been getting by on little enough. He could surely hang on, mark time, piddle along, if that was what he actually desired. Obviously, he came to Mexico and went to Cuernavaca to get this divorcee business off his hands. But that was over a year ago. What made him stay on? Had he actually squandered away more than a year of his lifetime mooning over the thing, trying to forget something that had to be forgotten, striving to remove from his mind this great obstruction which impeded clear thought and made detachment impossible? Was that it? And now that he finally broke away from it, that he finally emerged from this inertia, would he regain the peace and clarity of mind and the full detachment that made creative effort possible? Could he buckle down, get set and going?

He had done things before. That last novel, though, was something he could hardly be proud of. Had been done under stress, during the drawnout ordeal with Keith. On the whole a deplorably pointless essay. But that first play he did with Anatole was probably not altogether bad. Lasted eight months on Broadway and almost two years on the road. And this thing they were working on now—might revamp the stuff that's been written, maybe scrap and rewrite the entire second act, and the thing might yet turn out all right. Or maybe chuck the whole thing and start on something else.

Fiercely hunking its horn, the bus shoved its way through a mixed herd of cows and goats and slowed down as it approached a village sprawling along both sides of the road. As Boyd contemplated the passing scene trite thoughts intruded on his mind. Goats, pigs, cows, dogs. People. Life goes on. Everywhere and always. The idea is to be able to see it, to feel it. The idea is to be able to find the hidden significance in the

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Oil.

By Ann Medallé.

Collecting Reptiles

By John W. Hilton

A LETTER from Charles Bogert of the American Museum of Natural History started a rather interesting train of events, on one of my trips into Sonora. The letter followed me from the States, and did not catch up with me until I was settled at the ranch. Mr. Bogert had discovered that I was in the area for the whole rainy season, and wrote to find out if I would be willing to collect for his institution. He wanted a series of the typical reptiles and amphibia of the region. I was surprised to hear that a country so accessible had not already been collected; but it seems that museums have thousands of dollars to spend in their other departments, and very little with which to carry on the science of herpetology.

My sojourn in the country during that particular time of year was especially important, since many of the reptile forms and most of the amphibia are sleeping somewhere under rocks, or buried in the mud, until the coming of the rains. The whole thing sounded rather simple. All I had to do was to read the small pamphlet, inclosed, on the preparation of reptiles in the field, get some containers and preservative and start pickling all the "critters" that came crawling or swimming across my path. I answered that I would accept the job and would start at once to make a collection. It was a chance to help science, learn something, and earn a little money toward the expenses of my trip.

My answer was hardly in the hands of the runner, who would carry it on foot to Alamos, when I started out to see what I could find to enrich man's knowledge of reptiles. Down by the arroyo I had noticed some very interesting little lizards with black-and-white ringed tails which they carried in a high curve up over their back. The little boys called them "perritos" (little dogs), because of the way they waved their tails as they ran. The rains had not set in and all life was pretty scarce, even lizards; but these

"perritos" were thick in the sandy bed of the arroyo. I was confident I could get a fine series in no time. It did not take me very long to discover two things: first, I was no match for little striped-tailed lizards; and second, the antics of a full-grown man chasing lizards brought forth rather uncomplimentary side glances from the villagers, who gathered to see what was the matter with me.

Finally a couple of little boys came to my rescue. They carried the usual slingshots and a pocketful of stones. One of them drew a bead on a lizard twenty feet away and knocked him kicking into the sand, at the first shot. I gave the boy a Mexican nickel, and in no time the small boys of the village were out in force. Pebbles were buzzing from dozens of slingshots in a regular blitzkrieg. Striped-tailed lizards were biting the dust, all around, to the tune of a nickel apiece. I tried to call a halt, but only succeeded after I had bought over two pesos' worth of lizards. This taught me that employing a small boy with a slingshot is the most efficient method of collecting small reptiles in Sonora, and that there must be a set of rules to keep from deleting the reptile population—and my supply of Mexican five-cent pieces.

* * *

As I paid each boy I explained that I would not, under any conditions, purchase any more of this species of lizard; but I would give a nickel each for any other kinds brought in during the next twenty-four hours. They seemed mystified as to why one lizard should be of more interest to me than another—but five centavos was five centavos—and they separated in search of others.

I put all the lizards in a collecting sack; then I bought a couple of quarts of mescal in the village, and went home to pickle my first lot of specimens. The museum had promised to ship me some "formalin,"

but added that any strong native liquor would make a suitable preservative until their package arrived. I had sampled this particular lot of mescal a few nights before, and was in a position to vouch for its strength.

My instructions were to kill the specimens by immersing the sack in warm water and drowning them. These lizards looked pretty dead when I got to the house, so I put them all in a widemouthed jar and poured mescal to cover them. Before I could screw the cover on, most of the lizards came suddenly to life, and a couple climbed out and raced madly across the floor. It was at this point that one of my hostesses came into the room to discover the cause of the commotion. I had no idea she was so afraid of lizards! When the whole thing subsided and the vagrants were safely steeping in mescal with their brethren, I promised not to bring any more reptiles farther than the front porch.

Gradually, the boys began coming back in twos and threes with their catches. I set up my purchasing office and pickling department on the front porch; and the collection began to grow. They had quite a variety; many of which I had never seen. I was very gratified. Several die-hards brought me additional specimens of the original striped-tailed lizards; and offered them at reduced prices, all the way from two to five for a nickel. I was adamant; for if I had purchased a single one, the whole structure of my collecting idea would have collapsed. The boys were a little sore and disappointed, but the next day they were back with something that I did want. As soon as I had a good series of any other lizard, I placed the bottle in plain sight, and told each of my collectors that I had plenty of this kind and would purchase no more. After about the fourth day, things began to slow down in the collecting line. It became apparent that I had a series of all of the commoner types, but I had one or two of several forms that appeared to be either scarce or hard to take. With this discovery, I modified my system a bit further, and raised the price of these reptiles to a dime. Then I offered fifteen centavos for anything not so far represented in this collection. With this added stimulation, I was able to complete several more series before the rains came.

I realized that with the rains there would be an advent of many different forms that are rare or absent during the dry season. I made it very plain that we would be back on the five-cent basis, after the first rain. The boys not only saw the fairness of this plan but seemed anxious for the rains to come; for they insisted that after that they could make a great deal more collecting at a nickel apiece than they could now at fifteen cents.

Finally one of the great thunder clouds that had been threatening every afternoon came over the mountain and broke in all its fury. I have seen it rain elsewhere, but I can truthfully say that I have never seen so much water come down in so short a time. In a few minutes the yard was a lake, and we could hear the roar of rushing water going over the dam in what had been a dry arroyo that very afternoon. The storm was over in an hour and, before the sun set, a stream of boys came sloshing in through the front gate, burdened down with the "darnedest" collection of lizards, frogs, snakes and turtles that I have ever seen. They knew that I was going to purchase only a limited number of any of these things, and they all wanted to be in on the easy money. Most of the snakes were badly battered and mangled. Many of them looked like fine varieties, but I refused to purchase them in such a condition. If I had, I would never have gotten a good specimen; for the boys seemed to think that a snake had to be beaten to a pulp before it could be carried, even in a sling on the end of a long stick. The next day the same boys were back with

other specimens, alive and wriggling, in nooses at the end of poles. They had snared them. It was a constant source of wonder for them to watch me take these wriggling fellows out of the snares with my hands. I don't think money could have hired them to touch a snake, dead or alive.

I had two five-gallon tins full of reptiles by now, and toads and frogs were piling in by the dozen. I have never seen so many different kinds of toads in my life. We caught five different species, hopping about in the yard, one evening after a rain. The arroyo rang with a chorus of frogs in a range from the highest high tenor to the deepest basso profundo. We soon discovered that some of the loudest of these fellows were also the smallest. Several of the tree frogs sounded almost like birds, and actually fooled a good bird collector, when he came to Guirocoba.

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I think the most outstanding frog specimens were brought to me one night by the mozo who carried the water for the house. He said he found them sitting on the edge of the well. They were the most brilliant green I have ever seen, with topaz-colored eyes that brinked and glittered in the light of the gasoline lantern. I didn't have the heart to kill them. Their skin was like polished jade, without a wart or mark on it; and they were about four inches long. I put them in an empty water olla on the porch, so I could show the boys in the morning and ask for more. The next morning I took the lid off the olla to show a couple of boys the beautiful green frogs. They weren't green at all! They were the same reddish-brown of the earthen water jar. The boys laughed, hilariously, and told me to put some green leaves in the olla and see what happened. In a few minutes the frogs were as green as ever. This species never seemed to be common, and I had to raise the price to twenty-five centavos each, before I got a good series for the museum and half a dozen to keep alive for pets. I never received a lone specimen. They were always found and caught in pairs. One morning the maid found a beautiful pair sleeping under the washtub. The specimens I took back to the States lived and were quite happy in captivity, for about two years. They finally died, within a period of about forty-eight hours, without seeming to act sick or ever losing their appetites. Someday I am going to have some more. They make fine pets, and will take insects or meal worms right out of a person's hand, after they are tame. Perhaps they got the wrong sort of bug. I'll feed the next ones on meal worms; for I know they thrive on this diet.

After the first surge, following the rains, the reptile business slowed down again; but I had a collection many times larger than I had dreamed was possible. I had spent over half the money the museum was paying, but I felt that I had spent it wisely. There were a few things that did not come in very fast. Most of these were either poisonous or the boys had been led to believe them so. One small, warty, nocturnal lizard, with suction cups on its toes, was considered terribly poisonous—even to the touch. I was forced to collect my own series of these, which I did in one night with the aid of a flashlight. The natives called this night lizard "salamanquez," and considered it a great deal worse than a rattler.

I never had the heart to kill the turtles, but kept a good series of all but one species alive in an old steep-sided cement water trough. They were the source of a great deal of amusement. One little, spotted species turned out to be new to science. It has since been named after Dr. Klauber of the San Diego Zoo. I was not able to obtain a full series of this species, even though I raised my offer to two pesos. Another larger black turtle, with orange on the sides,

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Mural Detail.

By Ryah Ludina.

Governmental Finance

By Tomme Clark Call

THE FINANCIAL ACTIVITY of government is of exceptional importance to economic development in Mexico. Since 1946, federal, state, and local governmental expenditures have amounted to a sum equal to about an eighth of the national income. That is a relatively low tax level by today's standards in industrial countries, or by the maximum safe rate of 25 per cent usually fixed by economists. From 1946 through 1951, governmental funds directly accounted for about a third of the nation's capital formation, in fact, for the bulk of other than residential construction. And it was noted in the previous article how governmental fiscal policy sharply affects and, by large, can control the country's monetary situation.

During the 1946-51 period, the Mexican Federal Government not only achieved improved financial stability, but its fiscal system also became a more flexible and stronger instrument for guiding economic development. From the point of view of democracy, if not of economics, perhaps the most unfavorable aspect of the Mexican fiscal situation is the preponderant position of the Federal Government, which has so pre-empted revenue sources as to leave the state and local governments virtually impotent to fulfill their functions for a balanced federal system of reasonably efficient and democratically decentralized government.

A notable exception is the small but metropolitan Federal District, which in 1949 spent nearly twice as much as all the country's municipalities put together and 42 per cent as much as all states territories combined. In 1951, its budget amounted to 275 million pesos, the largest share earmarked for public works. During the past decade, for example, Mexico City has spent a quarter of a billion pesos for the great Lerma Water System, which is now complete.

While the index of total governmental expenditures, in terms of constant purchasing power, rose from 100 in 1945 to 122.1 in 1949, the federal expenditures index moved from 100 to 128.3. Similarly, total governmental revenue increased from 100 to 145.4, but federal revenue went from 100 to 154.7. By 1949, therefore, federal expenditures were 2,700 million pesos in a total governmental outlay of 3,478.4 millions, and federal revenue was 2,800 million pesos in a governmental income totaling 3,590.2 millions. That trend and the current situation do not bode well for a work-

ing, well-balanced federal-state-local system of government as envisioned by the 1917 Constitution. Fiscal conventions have been held for the purpose of readjusting inter-governmental revenue relations, such as the 1947 effort toward a general sales tax collected by the Federal Government with allocations of revenue to the participating states, but without notable success toward decentralization.

Attention here will be devoted to the dominant federal fiscal system. By 1950, net federal expenditures were estimated at 3.1 billion pesos, with national income near 30 billions. With 1945 as the base year of 100, the 1950 outlay stood at 210 in peso terms and 133.7 in terms of constant purchasing power. Net federal revenue for 1950 was estimated at 3.3 billion pesos, the 1945-based index standing at 259.8 in terms of pesos and at 164.7 in terms of constant purchasing power. Thus the estimated surplus was about 200 million pesos. In recent years the surplus-deficit history has been: 1946, 145-million-peso surplus; 1947, 190.8-million-peso deficit; 1948, 278.3-million-peso deficit; 1949, 133.5-million-peso surplus, and 1950, 200-million pesos surplus. The Federal Government was also running a sizable surplus in 1951, and President Aleman announced in December a 4-billion-peso 1952 budget, which also contained allowance for a small surplus.

Most notable change in the federal tax structure over the past decade has been the increased reliance on income taxes, from 7.2 per cent of revenue in 1939 to 22.9 per cent in 1950. Income taxes accounted for nearly 30 per cent of revenue in 1951, as President Aleman declared a public policy of placing more of the burden 'on individual incomes, especially on persons who have greater resources.'

The major single source of federal revenue, taxes on foreign trade, declined from 32.9 per cent of total revenue in 1939 to 26.5 per cent in 1950. Taxes on mining and natural resources increased proportionately from 7.3 per cent in 1939 to 9.7 per cent in 1950. The percentage of total revenues supplied by industry and transport taxes dropped during the same period, as commercial sales taxes' share increased.

It is thus significant that direct taxation's proportionate contribution to federal revenue expanded from 8.7 per cent in 1939 to 23.2 per cent in 1950, as indirect taxation's share dropped from 71.9 per cent in 1939 to 60.7 per cent in 1950. Revenue otherwise classified weakened in relative position from 19.4 per cent to 16.1 per cent.

The foreign trade taxes are by no means confined mainly to import duties. The government has moved to absorb a portion of exporters' profits artificially swollen by peso devaluation. After the 1938 devaluation, a 12 per cent export tax on appraised value was applied. In 1948, with further devaluation, the government added a 15 per cent ad valorem surtax, which absorbed at first a half and later about a third of the arbitrarily raised peso profits from exports. Besides being credited with aiding devaluation readjustment, the new export tax contributed largely to subsequent budget surpluses, yielding 367.5 million pesos in 1949 and 390 millions in 1950. It has been, in its post-devaluation effect, an excess profits or income tax. General export-tariff reductions, however, in 1951 and 1952 virtually wiped out the 1948 15 per cent surtax.

In 1949, internal industrial, commercial, and agricultural profits were tapped similarly with an excess profits tax, graduated from a 13 per cent levy on profits between 15 and 20 per cent of working capital, to a 25 per cent levy on profits exceeding 50 per cent of working capital. In its first year, that tax returned 43.7 million pesos, and it is credited with encouraging reinvestment of profits. In the same year, a federal tax on cars and freight vehicles locally assembled was added, and in 1950 postal rates were raised to offset that service's operating loss.

Budget control has improved recently in the Federal Government, as has administration of the tax-collection machinery. Official sources also claim 'a better understanding between the state and the taxpayer,' despite recent flare-ups of popular resentment. Though revenues have risen sufficiently to maintain a heavy public-works outlay while running a budget surplus, they still are inadequate to permit, in addition, raising the salary scale of public employees to a level of fairness and efficiency. In its 1951, the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America reached this general conclusion:

"Mexico's tax system is not yet sufficiently flexible to be used as an instrument of general economic policy or to absorb rapidly any inflationary price increases which might occur. The decided improvement in public finances in the last two years seems, however, to indicate a sound trend which will make it possible to co-ordinate the requirements of economic development and fiscal and budgetary policy."

Interest charges on the Federal Government's budgeted public debt—reflecting devaluation, 1947—8 deficits and development financing—increased from 51.8 million pesos in 1946 to 87.2 millions in 1949, but that 4 per cent share of total expenditures is a relatively small burden.

Bond issues in 1947 and 1948 totaled a 668-million-peso increase in the internal public debt, with no material addition in 1949-50. The floating internal debt was considerably reduced in 1949-50, and Bank of Mexico data show a net redemption of internal funded and floating public debt of about 200 million pesos during these two years. In 1949, the Federal Government also gave the Bank of Mexico more than a half a billion pesos to absorb unpaid balances of official agricultural institutions.

After devaluation, and in accord with various readjustment agreements during the previous decade, the Mexican government's direct external debt in 1949

totaled 809.3 million pesos. Interest has been met regularly, and in 1948 and 1949 small payments on principal were achieved.

Through Nacional Financiera, and thus mainly outside the official budget, the Mexican government has received substantial external credits in recent years from the United States Export-Import Bank, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and other foreign agencies. The net increase of such debt between 1946 and 1950 was 85.4 million dollars, with another 150-million-dollar Export-Import line of credit opened in 1950, according to the summation of data from official sources by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America. The World Bank added 29.7 million dollars in January 1952.

President Aleman in 1951 reported that Nacional Financiera, as of August 3rd, had acquired direct loans from the Export-Import Bank, World Bank, and Bank of America totaling 350 million dollars, and had given its collateral to various corporations and institutions for credits amounting to 49 million dollars. Of the 399-million-dollar total, 172 millions of direct loans and 30 millions of guaranteed loans were spent by late 1951. He added, however, that 69 million dollars of the first line of credits had been amortized, along with 5.4 millions of the second. He thus reported liabilities of the Nacional Financiera—indirectly obligations of the government—on those credits at 103 million dollars in direct loans and 24.6 millions in collateral. Those loans were mostly for machinery and equipment, with funds for dams and road construction as exceptions.

President Aleman, in September 1951, also reported that his administration had paid off 313¼ million pesos of the old Foreign Consolidated Debt, redeeming bonds with a nominal value of 20 million dollars. It also covered 5⅓ million dollars of the old Foreign National Railways Debt, reduced by 185 million dollar through a November 1949 agreement. The oil expropriation debt to the United States companies has been paid off, with continuing payments to other foreign companies by a later agreement. The administration further reported 10 million paid dollars to United States citizens on damage claims, from the Revolution, and a million dollars paid on the lend-lease contracts, with a 1951 agreement reducing that to 11 millions.

President Aleman, September 1951, also announced that the government had re-purchased from the Bank of Mexico a quarter billion pesos of the Consolidated Internal Debt, had abstained from issuing 149 million pesos authorized under the Income Law, and had covered corresponding debt service amounting to more than 110 million pesos. With a total of 266 million pesos paid between 1949 and mid-1951 on the Floating Debt, the government fully liquidated its overdraft on the Bank of Mexico.

The President reported total payments for the 1949-51 period at nearly a half billion pesos. The government also had liquidated the United States' 37-million-dollar loan, extended in 1947 and drawn on in 1950, for currency stabilization. In June 1951, the government contributed 22½ million dollars to the International Monetary Fund.

Finally, Nacional Financiera granted 400 million pesos in credits for industrial development during the first seven months of 1951, against 365 millions for all of 1950. That increased Nacional Financiera's holdings to more than 1¼ billion pesos, in contrast to about a third of a billion in 1946. A rather questionable form of debt was reported by President Aleman in September 1951: to maintain public works without further direct borrowing or running a budget deficit, the government authorized contractors to execute projects be-

Continued on page 54



Tempera.

By Amador Lugo.

Señorita Alaska

By Kim Schee

THE first time I saw her was in the plaza. She was sitting alone on one of the benches, and her expression indicated that she was alone by choice. She looked like the original pioneer woman, not the anemic and wistful type that Hollywood has been selling the public, but the type that could weather any physical vicissitude and, if the occasion demanded it, knock the stuffings out of the bravest of Indian Braves. She was powerfully built. There wasn't an ounce of fat on her, and she must have weighed a good hundred and sixty pounds. She had a pretty face, with ruddy complexion, blue-violet eyes, and thick black hair which she wore in a long bob. But despite her surprisingly pretty face and rather feminine clothes she looked formidable. With that body and proper coaching, I reflected, she could win the Olympic games single-handed.

From then on I only caught fleeting glimpses of the pioneer woman. I never had the opportunity of meeting her simply because I didn't know anyone in the village who was well acquainted with her and I wouldn't dream of introducing myself—not, at least, without a catcher's mask handy. I soon heard about her, however, and that's usually better than meeting a person. It was Isidro who told me about her. I should have thought of Isidro in the first place. He knows everyone personally in the village, and well he should, for Isidro is one of the village policemen and his job is to patrol the streets at night.

The conversation began as we were downing a few drinks at the Golondrina Cantina late one night.

"Señor," began Isidro, "what is Alaska?"

"Alaska," I said, "is a country."

"Entonces," said Isidro, "where is it?"

"It's north," I said, "north of Canada near the Artic Circle. It isn't far from Russia."

"Russia, no me digas—don't tell me," said Isidro flopping his arm about my shoulders. "That's where her husband comes from. He's Russian, si, Señor, Russian."

I was a bit worried. Isidro is not a particularly good drinker in the sense that his mind is apt to wander. However, he always carries a vicious-looking revolver on his hip, and in Mexico a man like that is well worth humoring.

"Whose husband?" I asked warily.

"Her husband—Señorita Alaska's husband. I cannot say the name because it is Russian. So I call her Señorita Alaska. What a woman is, Señor, What a woman—strong like a bull..."

Isidro's eyes brightened. Who, I questioned my brain, is strong like a bull? The answer came more quickly than I expected—The pioneer woman.

"Ah, I remember her," I replied. "She certainly looked strong."

"Looked strong? Señor, she was strong. She was the strongest woman in the world. I know and I will tell you how I know."

I lent encouragement by way of a drink, and Isidro continued.

"I had just finished my rounds. The village was quiet except for a few harmless borrachos who sing all night in the barrancas, and so I decided to have a drink. The only cantina I could find open was the Gallo, so I went there although I do not like Don Ladislao, first because the gringos have spoiled him, and second because he blamed me when his cantina was robbed. I am only a man, Señor, with two

eyes and two legs, and I cannot see everywhere and be everywhere at once, but you can never convince Don Ladislao of this. But please never mention this as he pays me well.

"Bueno, I had been in the Gallo about an hour chatting with Don Ladislao, when Señorita Alaska appeared in the doorway. She stood there a moment looking at us without changing her expression, and then she asked me if I could direct her to the Casa Cardoso. Her Spanish wasn't bad, though she had a terrible gringo accent. I didn't pay much attention to that, for what interested me was the woman herself. I'd never seen anything like her before, and I've seen a lot of women in my life, Señor. I guess it must have been the surprise of seeing such a pretty face on such a strong body. Most women who have big bodies have faces like the Devil himself!

* * *

"Bueno, Señor, I didn't waste any time. After I had purposely given her a lot of directions. I suggested that it would be much safer if I accompanied her to the Casa Cardoso. I told her that the streets were no longer safe at night what with the marijuana smokers and the pelados from the near-by villages roaming around. This argument didn't seem to frighten her in the least, which is understandable, but I kept right on insisting, and seeing that I was a policeman she finally consented.

"As you know, Señor, there are several ways of getting to the Casa Cardoso from the Gallo. I, of course, took the long way, which leads you past the Shrine of Guadalupe, a very romantic place, Señor—and one never can tell. The first part of the way she walked very slowly, and I had a chance to ask her many questions. I found out that she had visited Mexico every summer for the last four years and that she came from Alaska. It was the first time I ever heard the word, Alaska. She also told me that she owned a cantina and boardinghouse which she and her husband ran. I then made it a point to ask a few questions about her husband. She said her husband was a Russian and was very tall and strong with arms on him like a gorilla. I was very much relieved when she told me that he was back in Alaska. Not that I was afraid, because a bullet does the same damage to a big man as a small man, but I do not like scandals as I have my job and a family to think about.

"We finally came to the Shrine, and I suggested that we go up and look at it. To my surprise she made no objections, and so we climbed the steps, she clinging to my arm for the first time, which could only mean one thing, Señor, for I assure you she could run up and down those steps all day without feeling tired. She seemed to enjoy the Shrine and especially the mountains and valleys in the distance, for it was a clear moonlit night, and all the time she was admiring the view she kept pressing my arm until it hurt. So I thought the time was ripe for action. I told her how beautiful she was, and then all of a sudden I grabbed her and put my arms around her and started to kiss her. And do you know, Señor, before I knew what had happened I was sprawled out on my back, flat on the ground. I only remember the sensation of being lifted and then falling and my two arms being jerked forward. Nothing more. It all happened in a flash.

"Bueno! I lay there on the ground for a while. I wasn't hurt any, only a little dazed, and I couldn't muster enough courage to face her. I've never been in such a strange predicament in all my life, and I assure you, Señor, I've been in some strange predicaments. However, I finally got to my feet, and for want of something to do I began brushing my clothes with my hands, keeping my eyes from hers. Then she began to talk in a low voice. She asked me if I was hurt and then told me that she liked me but that I had not behaved like a caballero and that in the future it wouldn't be necessary to make advances to her. In Alaska, she said, a man has to treat a woman politely, if he intends to make headway. But to start manhandling a woman without explaining your intentions is considered very bad manners. Si, Señor, may God pull out my tongue by the roots if I am not telling you the truth. And when she told me this she left me and ran down the steps. I didn't try to follow her. I just sat there by the shrine and thought of what she said. It was dawn when I arrived at the Casa Cardoso where she lived. And this time I was very polite, Señor, oh, very, very polite."

Isidro sighed and gazed wistfully into his empty glass. "Is Alaska far from Mexico, Señor?"

Very far, Isidro," I said. "About as far as anything could be. You're not thinking of going there, are you?"

"Señor, I can think of nothing else."

Trees

By Ross Parmenter

I have known the irregular, balanced patterning
of trunks, boughs and foliage,
and the frames they form
for landscape and sky;
and I have delighted
in the sweet-smelling greenness of trees,
and their various sounding leaves
that deepen the enveloping silence,
moisten the wind, hold off the sun
and break the moonlight in pieces.
But to love trees forever
a man must live in the desert
and move from the parching glare,
suddenly, into the coolness of their rustling shade.

The Story of the Falcon Dam

By Stewart Morton

THE problem of an equitable distribution of the waters of Rio Grande in territories of Mexico and the United States originated during the early years of this century, when the first irrigation systems were projected or built along its length on either side of the border. The solution of this international problem became obviously urgent since 1914, when the first major scale irrigation system was built in the Lower Rio Grande Valley in Texas, where the total stream of the Rio Grande was utilized for the irrigation of 593,000 acres of land.

Hence, in 1926, finding itself denied the use of Rio Grande waters for the agricultural development of its own lands extending along its southern banks, Mexico commenced to utilize the waters of its tributary streams, building the La Boquilla Dam in the District of Delicias. In keeping with this policy, Mexico also built the Don Martin and El Azucar dams, utilizing in national territory the water sheds of the Salado and San Juan rivers, which are the main tributaries of the Rio Grande on the Mexican side. Subsequently, in 1936, Mexico built the irrigation system at El Retamal, precisely across the Rio Grande from the Lower Rio Grande Valley system on the American side.

Facing this situation the two countries created, on the basis of full equality and respect of mutual rights, the International Commission of Limits, formed of Mexican and American engineers, in order to develop a working plan whereby the exact proportions of waters due each country were determined upon the consideration of their respective sources.

This plan, on the other hand, served as the basis for an international treaty which classifies the waters according to their origin, as those which are entirely Mexican or entirely American, or those which may be utilized on a half and half basis, or on the basis of one third by Mexico and two thirds by the United States.

This same international treaty also provides that for the best utilization of the river's waters major international dams must be built; and it was thanks to this provision that the Falcon Dam was built by common agreement as an initial project of this kind. Thus, with the completion of this dam Mexico and the United States have created through international cooperation the first important work of irrigation on the Rio Grande.

* * *

This dam is situated at a distance of twelve kilometers from Ciudad Mier, in the State of Tamaulipas. The project was developed jointly by the Mexican and American members of the International Commission of Limits, with the respective technical cooperation of Mexico's Secretariat of Hydraulic Resources and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. The dam, one of the longest of its kind in the world, measures 8,014 meters, of which 4,926 meters are in Mexican territory and 3,088 in that of the United States. Its height, including the foundation, is that of 50 meters; it is 10.67 meters in width at the top and 300 meters at the base.

The hydro-electric generating plants of each country are located at the foot of the dam, being equal in size and generating equipment. These will annually produce 250 million kilowatt hours of power which will be distributed in equal shares in Mexican and U.S. territory.

* * *

In accord with the stipulations of the international treaty, the construction work was done jointly by

both countries, each paying its share of the costs of the dam in proportion with the volume of water each is to draw from it, and equal amounts in the construction of the power generating plants. Two contracts were made for this construction: one by the Mexican Section of the International Commission of Limits and Waters and the Secretariat of Hydraulic Resources, in keeping with Mexican laws, and the other by the U.S. Section of the above Commission, subject to the laws of that country. All the work was carried out under the supervision of this Commission.

The work was initiated in January of 1951, and by the 30th of November of 1952 58% of its Mexican portion was completed. This work was carried out in accord with the program which set the 26th of September, 1953, as the date of its termination.

The structure of the dam serves as a bridge which links a network of roads in Mexico and the United States. New roads have been built to communicate the dam with the communities of Nueva Ciudad Guerrero and Ciudad Mier, where they join national highways. A landing field has been built along the road which connects the above two communities.

The Falcon Dam, whose benefits are to be shared by both nations, will serve three main purposes—i.e., to irrigate soil, to control floods, and to produce electric power. The territory on both sides of the Rio Grande, which in the past has often suffered great damage through floods, will now be almost entirely free of this danger. Of the waters stored by the Falcon Dam Mexico will receive slightly less than half, which will suffice for the irrigation of from 180,000 to 220,000 hectares.

Since the Falcon Dam is primarily a reservoir, situated at a distance of some 170 kilometers from the areas it will irrigate, the river itself serves to carry these waters to the outlets toward such areas. On the American side a series of pumping plants have been constructed, which lift the water and distribute it in the canals of the various districts that form the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Two plants have been erected on the Mexican side of the river, which extract the water by gravity and send it into the network of irrigation canals.

Since the beginning of this year, the Secretariat of Hydraulic Resources has been proceeding with the construction of an additional network of canals, which will extend over an area of 150,000 hectares, and will be completely finished by the end of next year. Another plant on the Mexican side has been built at Anzaldúas, which will provide for an irrigated area of 40,000 hectares. Therefore, it is calculated that at the beginning of next year the Falcon Dam will irrigate on the Mexican side 100,000 hectares, while by the end of the same year the total reclaimed area of 220,000 hectares (596,200 acres) will be receiving its waters.

The artificial lake formed by the dam, 100 kilometers in length along the course of the river, has a storage capacity of 4,038 million cubic meters. The communities, Ciudad Guerrero, on the Mexican side, and Zapata, on the American, and a number of scattered farms on both sides, having been located in the area now covered by the lake, had to be evacuated. Hence, a new and modern Ciudad Guerrero was built by the Mexican Government on the banks of the lake, providing homes for the 4,000 residents of the older community which vanished under the waters. With its wide, paved streets, two public parks, two schools, a hospital, and all the necessary municipal services, the new Ciudad Guerrero is truly a model community.



THE SPLINTER. OIL.

By Raúl Anguiano.

Raúl Anguiano

By Guillermo Rivas

DURING the years when a group of native painters achieved in our midst the rebirth of mural painting, Mexico suddenly assumed a position of foremost importance in the world of art. The world took cognizance of a new and vital orientation, of a new moral precept and purpose in the monumental expression developed by this group of Mexican painters. In the revival of the technique of fresco buono, in the introduction of humanistic tenets and in the acceptance of the premise that social function is the ideal justification of art, Mexico acquired a position of eminence unequalled by any other country in the world.

And while it is possible that the golden era in the development of our mural art came to an end with the death of its greatest master, José Clemente Orozco, murals are still being painted in Mexico and there is every indication that this form of art is not likely to die out. The main reason for its sustained vitality is the fact that a whole generation of younger painters has been brought up under its influence and with an ultimate aspiration to paint on walls.

Mural art in this country has probably passed its more spectacular phases, but the sound plastic tradition it left in its wake has preserved our easel art from falling into mediocrity or decay. Mexican contemporary art has not yielded to cosmopolitanism, it has preserved a national stamp and an unebbing vitality, because the mural tradition has kept it firmly rooted in native soil and has not taken it away from the visual world.

* * *

Among the group of young Mexican painters whose personal style stems from the mural tradition Raúl Anguiano provides an outstanding example. Here is a young artist whose work, pursuing the basic aim of achieving art, does not denote a flight from reality but a sustained effort to get closer to it, to probe its depths, to dissect its substance, and to bring it forth in readily communicative terms. By way of three-dimensional structure, by the objective means of form, space, color and texture, Anguiano converts reality into art.

He builds his volumes in sculptured roundness and places his figures against palpable space. His linear design has a classical purity and his composition is free of superfluous detail. His palette is completely unmannered: he employs his colors not to create effects but to recreate his forms with the fullest range of tonal values and greatest exactitude. And yet his forms are those of art and not mere copies of nature. Fusing naturalism with classicism, his pictures have a wholeness, a salient integral quality, which imbue them with life.

* * *

Raúl Anguiano, whose newer works are being exhibited at this time at the Salon de la Plástica Mexicana, was born in Guadalajara, Jalisco, in 1915. He received his initial instruction in his native city under the guidance of the excellent painter and teacher José Vizearra, and subsequently at the Escuela Libre de Pintura, conducted by Ixoa Farías. He came to Mexico City in 1934, and though he was still under twenty, his work soon gained widespread attention.

His progress during the following two decades has been truly notable. His work has been presented in ten one-man shows in this city; it has been included in numerous group exhibits, and was shown a year ago in Paris. An assiduous and prolific worker, he has nevertheless found time for extensive travel in the United States, in Cuba, in France, Spain, England, Holland, Belgium, Germany and Italy. In 1949 he formed part of an expedition to the Selva Lacandona and the Maya ruins at Bonampak, organized by the National Institute of Fine Arts, and returned with a bulky portfolio of sketches depicting the life of the primitive Lacandon Indians, from which he produced a highly interesting series of paintings and lithographs.

Anguiano's paintings may be found at the National Museum of Plastic Arts of Mexico, at the Royal Museums of Art and History, in Brussels, Belgium; at the New York Museum of Modern Art, and in many private collections scattered through different parts of the world. He executed mural paintings in the buildings of the Confederación Revolucionaria Michoacana de Trabajo, at Morelia, Michoacán (1936); of the Centro Escolar Revolución, in this city (1937); of the Confederación Campesina "Emiliano Zapata," in Puebla, Puebla (1937). In 1950 he collaborated with Chávez Morado in the painting of a large portable mural for the Pan American Congress of Architects held at Habana, Cuba.

The splendid record achieved by this young Mexican painter does not only attest a high degree of personal success. It attests the fact that the modern Mexican art expression, representing a consistent evolution of the mural heritage, continues to be significant and vital. It yet defines a clear and puissant positive note in a world largely given to aesthetic negation.

NATIVE MOTHER.

By Raúl Anguiano.



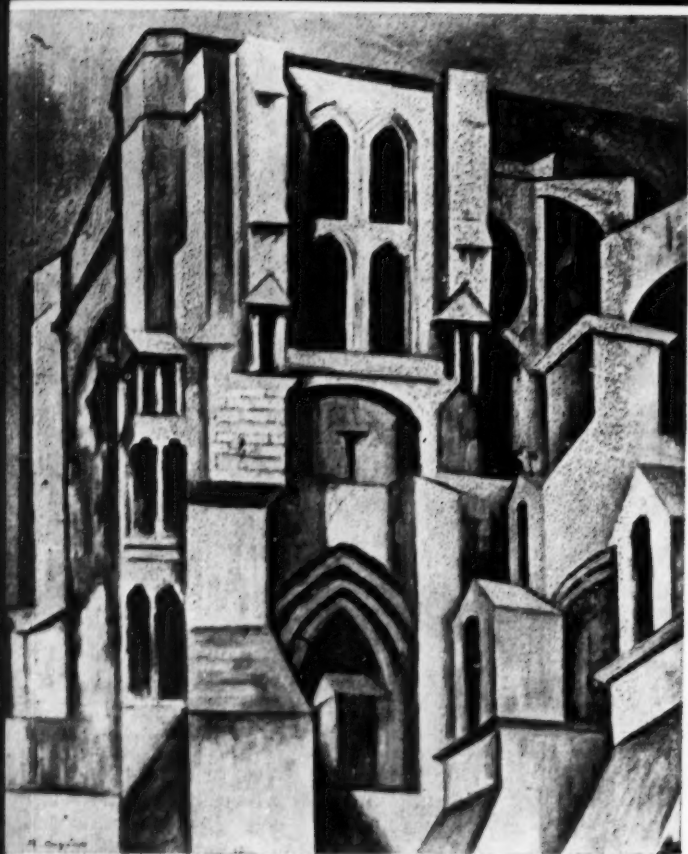
GOLDEN GIRL. Oil.

By Raúl Anguiano.

MOTHERHOOD. Oil.

By Raúl Anguiano.





CHARTRES. Oil.

By Raúl Anguiano.



PORTRAIT. Oil.

By Raúl Anguiano.



PORTRAIT. Oil.

By Raúl Anguiano.

Un Poco de Todo

RESEARCH WITH SAFETY

HERE is something to be said in favor of research concerned with dead civilizations as against most modern research—in physics, for example. No discoveries concerning dead civilizations can possibly be regarded as destructive of modern civilization. The same cannot be said of discoveries in physics. So one can read of the patient uncovering of the Mycenaean civilization of Greece, without any feeling of alarm. It is true that this civilization came to a violent end long before atomic weapons or even gunpowder was invented. Continued pressure by overwhelming invading forces, armed only with weapons of bronze, could overthrow ancient kingdoms and give magnificent palaces to the flames. Mr. Toynbee has catalogued a dozen such civilizations, which rose, flourished for centuries, then perished utterly from the earth, leaving behind many wonderful things which modern research recovers from barren mounds of earth.

* * *

The scene of last summer's delving by an American and Greek force of archaeologists is Homer's "sandy Pylos" on the west coast of the Peloponnese. This is a comparatively recent field of exploration, most of mainland Greece, the Greek islands, Crete and Cyprus having already been much turned over in the search for ancient remains. Pylos, however, in the opinion of Dr. Carl W. Bledgen, Professor of Classical Archaeology at the University of Cincinnati, represents a third great seat of Mycenaean culture, rivaling Mycenae and Tiryns. Here on a hill a few miles from the rocky headland overlooking the harbor of Pylos and the island of Sphaeria, the archaeologists believe they have found the palace of Nestor, who, it appears, was no mythological character but a real Homeric king who sailed over the wine-dark sea in his black ships to the Trojan War.

* * *

If the palace near Pylos was in fact the seat of royal Nestor, it is a rare link between the present time and the age of myth. Homer's Nestor figures prominently in both the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey." He is represented as an old man, past 60, in the Trojan War, and is treated with affectionate indulgence by Homer. He loves to talk and to give advice, which is rarely followed. He had the good sense to go straight home when the war was over and thus he escaped the hair-raising adventures of Odysseus. He was more fortunate than his commander-in-chief, Agamemnon, who returned home to be murdered by his wife. Nestor seems to have enjoyed a happy old age surrounded by his children in his palace overlooking Pylos and the blue Ionian Sea.

* * *

We have a delightful picture of Nestor at home in the "Odyssey." Telemachus, son of Odysseus, visits the old king seeking news of his father, accompanied by the goddess Athene, who on this occasion takes the form of a mortal named Mentor. Nestor tells a long story of the return of the heroes from Troy but he has no news of Odysseus. With homely touches Homer portrays Nestor the host:

"Then verily Athene and godlike Telemachus were both fain to return to the hollow ship; but Nestor on his part sought to stay them and he spoke to them saying: 'This may Zeus forbid, and the other immortal gods, that ye should go from my house to

your swift ship as from one utterly without raiment and poor, who has not cloaks and blankets in plenty in his house whereon both he and his guests may sleep softly. Nay, in my house there are cloaks and fair blankets. Never surely shall the dear son of this man Odysseus lie down upon the deck of a ship, while I yet live and children after me are left in my halls to entertain strangers, even whosoever shall come to my house.'"

* * *

In the last glimpse we have of Nestor he is presiding over a sacrificial feast in his palace. He sits on "polished stones which were before his lofty doors" where Neleus, his father, was wont to sit. His sons' wives are gathered about him. Telemachus joins them and the crew of his ship. They have a glorious feast. Then Nestor orders the horses yoked to a car that is to carry Telemachus to hollow Laedaemon. "Then Telemachus mounted the beautiful car and Peisistratus, son of Nestor, a leader of men, mounted beside him and took the reins in his hands. He touched the horses with the whip to start them, and nothing loath the pair sped on to the plain, and left the steep citadel of Pylos." It is to this citadel that attention is again turned after three thousand years.

ETIMOLOGY

In the course of this month Knopf will publish Elliot Arnold's "The Time of the Gringo." The key word in the title is pronounced, as every other school-boy knows, green-go. It is a word whose origins have long beguiled, and often becalmed, many valiant etymologists. The most persistent legend has it originating from the popularity of the song, based on Bobby Burns' poem, "Green Grow the Rushes, Oh!" which American cowboys and soldiers in Texas (during the Mexican War) apparently sang whenever they weren't chewing their chow.

No, says author Arnold, this is naive and a myth. He says Dr. Frank Vizetelly has traced gringo as far back as 1787, to Terreros y Pando's "Diccionario Castellano," published in Madrid, where "gringo" is defined as "The name given in Malaga to those foreigners who have a certain accent which prevents them from speaking Spanish fluently and naturally; and in Madrid the same term is used for the same reason, especially with reference to the Irish." Gringo would then be a corruption of the Spanish griego, meaning Greek, and the sense would be contemptuous and clear—that to the foreigner Spanish was so much Greek.

In the possible light of this explication, the title of Mr. Arnold's novel reads like a sermon for the times. There's an awful lot of us Gringos around these days, and we're not confining it to the Southwest or any one part of the globe.

THE "WETBACK" SCANDAL

When U.S. Attorney General Brownell visited the Mexican border recently and saw himself the nature of the problem of the illegal influx of Mexican workers into this country, he termed the situation "shocking" and pledged the Administration to stop the inflow. His subordinates apparently have since been taking action on the matter, raiding farms on which these "wetbacks" are employed and deporting them to Mexico. The result of these steps has been what might have been anticipated. Those employers who benefit

Continued on page 42

Literary Appraisals

THE BIG TREE OF MEXICO. By John Skeaping. Illustrated from Photographs and Drawings by the Author. 234 pp. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

TO Americans, Mexico is a next-door vacation land; to the English it is a remote exotic ranking in glamour with Tibet. Here a sensitive artist from Devon discovers Indian Mexico. No tourist, he came as a sculptor bent on spying out the ancient secret of Oaxaca's black pottery. He lived on intimate terms with the Indians, became part of a family and tried to become an Indian.

Only an artist or a hopeless romantic would have the courage and the disregard of such civilized amenities as privacy and plumbing to do what John Skeaping persevered at. How he could do it with a smattering of Spanish and no Zapotec at all must remain his secret. He won the confidence and love of the people of El Tule village near Oaxaca. At El Tule is the Big Tree, a giant cypress 144 feet high, with a trunk 150 feet in circumference. Approximately 2,000 years old, the Big Tree is known throughout Mexico, is regarded almost as a deity by the Indians and has its own fiesta day.

Mr. Skeaping became the mainstay of the Pablo family of seven, who were subsisting on a peso (12 cents) a day. He lived through their bitter times and fiestas. Now and again he fled to the Tehuantepec Isthmus for a breather among the less exacting Indians of La Ventosa, near Salina Cruz. This small book has many touching descriptions and amusing incidents, among them the artist's quest for a nude female model among what must be the world's physically most modest people. It leads him to a low dive, thinking that he can hire a prostitute, at least. His proposition only revolts the madam. He tries to buy a girl in Juchitan, and nearly ends up marrying one just to get his model.

* * *

The book has the ingenuous, lyrical tone of an amazed letter to the folks back home. Yet considering his real human achievement, Mr. Skeaping's report goes neither deep nor broad enough. It fails to communicate the whole of a soul-stirring experience.

It is a pity that out of such an intimate experience of an utterly strange world a richer narrative did not emerge. Nevertheless it is full of insights, and should make interesting reading especially to those who have visited Mexico or intend to go there, for it explains a mysterious people whom the tourist cannot get to know.

L. M.

AN ARTIST GROWS UP IN MEXICO. By Leah Brenner. With Illustrations by Diego Rivera. 144 pp. New York: The Beechurst Press.

IN "Moon Magic," the first of this sequence of tales, Pancho, the nascent artist, is being cared for by Maria, an Indian girl who cures the sick by invoking the spirit of a god wrapped up in a mysterious bundle. Pancho destroys the image and, though Maria's life is symbolically destroyed with it, she fails to strike the child because she loves him. In "The Ghost's Shoes" another Indian girl, Paz, fears the faceless spirit that promises to reveal hidden treasure in the wall of Pancho's parents' house; when she finally reveals the place, Pancho, who draws, has the money to

buy paints. Porfirio Diaz is ruling Mexico and Pancho is now in parochial school; the padres know that Pancho is an unbeliever and prevail on him to answer all the questions when a Government inspector comes to see whether Catholicism is being placed above the State; when the other boys pick on him for his heresy he gets drunk on sacramental wine and imagines he sees the "Drunken Lizard" which gives him power to live forever.

"Merchant of Art" relates Pancho's discovery of José Guadalupe Posada, the great popular artist of Mexico; in the abyss between Posada and his academic masters Pancho discovers also the abyss between the poor and the rich, between Mexico and Spain. In the fifth story, "Discovery," Pancho, now in art school leads a strike against the dismissal of a beloved teacher and is expelled for the "Revolt." But in the final story Pancho is a young painter of some renown who is preparing to study art in Paris.

Although the author assures us that Pancho's "growth as an artist is purely a product of the imagination and has no relation to the development of any artist living or dead," the tales are a very thinly disguised recount of Diego Rivera's childhood. Like Pancho, Rivera was born in Guanajuato and christened with a very long name; he embraced atheism at 4, was expelled at 16 for a riot against Spanish "modernism" at the San Carlos academy and went to Paris after a disquieting affair with a music-hall actress. Pancho is described throughout as having a potbelly and eyes that bulge like a frog's.

This parallelism, and a considerable naiveté when dealing with the Church, the Revolution and Art, distract from the author's undeniable gifts as a teller of folk tales. "Moon Magic" has a fine simplicity and poignancy that the other stories seldom approach. Oddly enough the one drawing which completely lacks the robust realism and humor of Diego Rivera is the one which attempts to depict a fantastic dream.

S. R.

THE HIVE. By Camilo Jose Cela. Translated from the Spanish by J. M. Cohen in consultation with Arturo Barea. With an introduction by Arturo Barea. 257 pp. New York: Farrar, Straus & Young.

CAMILO JOSE CELA, the only considerable novelist to appear in Spain since the end of the civil war, fought in Franco's Army and was a member of the Falange party, and yet the censorship system forced the withdrawal of his first novel, published in 1942. That book, "Pascual Duarte's Family," is the story of a murderer told by himself, and its characters are for the most part as barren as the district they come from, semi-starved and violent. After its Argentinian success "Pascual Duarte's Family" was allowed to reappear in Barcelona. Its fourth edition contained a preface by Cela in which he thanked his enemies "*** who have given me so much help in my career." "If a place smells," he added, "the best way to attract attention is not to have the same smell only more so, but to change the smell." "The Hive" has not been published in Spain.

It is not to be wondered that the Franco censorship disapproves of Cela's novels. Life in Madrid as he portrays it is brutal, hungry and senseless. Hypocrisy, fear and oppression are in command. Cela's political loyalties may be conservative or reactionary but his literary affiliations are of the most radical:

they are with Camus and Sartre, with Moravia, with Zola and French naturalism. Only Cela has very little of the theoretician about him and has no existential, sexual or political message to deliver. It is in his directness and lack of squeamishness that he resembles Sartre and Moravia.

Cela writes: "My novel *La Colmena* ('The Hive'), the first book of the series 'Uncertain Roads,' is nothing but a pale reflection a humble shadow of the harsh, intimate painful reality of every day. They lie who want to disguise life with the crazy mask of literature. The evil that corrodes the souls, the evil that has as many names as we choose to give it, cannot be fought with the poultices of conformism or the plasters of rhetorics and poetries."

In practice, Cela does not ramble so much as he jumps. Now we are with the powerful Dona Rosa, who tyrannizes over her waiters and customers; now with a cafe musician; now with a mediocre nonconformist poet; then with a tender-hearted money lender; then with the bookkeeper of a black-marketeer; with old maids and prostitutes, with singers and seducers. An old woman is murdered. A man finds his wife's lover hiding in the laundry hamper. A father meets his daughter on the stairs of a house of assignation. The wife of a dying man is already planning to marry her first lover and to make him rich. All of this is rather abruptly and sketchily represented, it is forceful and it is bald.

One sympathizes with Cela in his impatience with literature. Probably he is attacking his conformist contemporaries within Spain. But there is a great deal to be said for his attitude. Literature is conservative; it is "behind the times," and it does not easily cope with certain familiar modern horrors. One asks one's self how Goethe would have described a concentration camp, or how Lope de Vega would have dignified a black-marketeer. Journalists and writers of memoirs rather than imaginative writers have told us

most of what we know of these and other phenomena of contemporary life. Apparently, however, these reporters do not satisfy the highest demands of the imagination. Attacking literature and writing novels, the talented Señor Cela puts himself into a rather paradoxical position.

J. M. Cohen, in consultation with Arturo Barea, has made an excellent translation. Mr. Barea has contributed a spirited and illuminating introduction.

S. B.

DIVINE HORSEMEN, THE LIVING GODS OF HAITI, by Maya Deren. London, Thames and Hudson, 1953 350 p. illus.

A FIRST CONSIDERATION in estimating the value of Maya Deren's "Divine Horsemen," which deals with the Voudoun cult and mythology, is to keep in mind how it came to be written. Miss Deren tells us that she went to Haiti in September 1947 on a Guggenheim Fellowship for creative work in the field or motion pictures. Her plan was to produce a film in which the Haitian dance, as a pure dance form, would figure prominently, but it was not long before she became convinced that the dance could not be considered independently of the mythology and the ritual. What evolved then, and with compulsive force—for she was obliged to spend four years in collecting the detailed material for this book and to return three times to Haiti—was this fresh and substantial work. The original project had to wait until after it was written.

"I had begun as an artist," she says, "as one who would manipulate the elements of a reality into a work of art in the image of my creative integrity; I end by recording, as humbly and accurately as I can, the logics of a reality which had forced me to recognize its integrity, and to abandon my manipulation."

There has been no lack of interest in the Voudoun religion among the anthropologists, people in-

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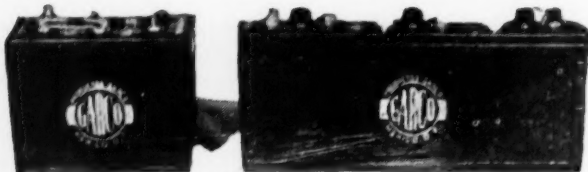
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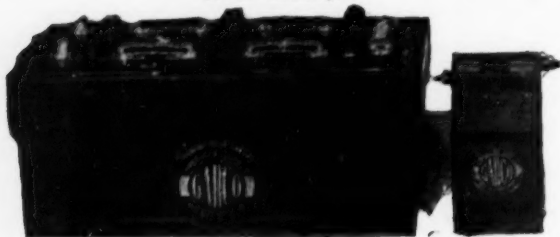


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velers to Haiti. In recent years, too, Haitian writers terested in Haitian culture in general, and casual tra- and intellectuals, recognizing more and more the rich- ness of Voudoun mythology, have done careful re- search and written about various aspects of it; others have drawn from its plentiful folklore to give life and character to the country's presentday literature, and perhaps in an honest effort to achieve wholeness cut of the diverse elements of the Haitian people.

But so far as I know, no really comprehensive study of the Voudoun religion had appeared until the publication of this work. The clearly delineated, lo- gical way in which this highly complex subject is treated here dispels the mystery and confusion result- ing from the partial or distorted presentation that has been the rule. The ancient cult of Voudoun is shown to us in proper focus. It is given sequence and mean- ing by one who is at the same time an acute observer, a participant, and a sensitive human being. To quote again from Miss Deren, "this is a religion of major stature, rare poetic vision and artistic expression, and... contains a pantheon of divinities which in as- tronomical terminology could be called a constellation of first magnitude."

The book is addressed both to the general reader and to the specialist. The footnotes at the bottom of the page are for the information and interest of the former, and those in the back of the book furnish ad- ditional details important to serious students of the subject.

It is impossible for a foreigner, and indeed for a member of the educated class of Haitians, to under- stand the great mass of Haitian people without know- ing a good deal about the Voudoun religion and the role it plays in their day-to-day life. The living con- dition of the vast majority of Haitians!—those who depend on the produce from their small plots of poor soil—are difficult to endure. These people must have a working religion that will satisfy their need for food and shelter, that will sustain and in fact cure them when disease strikes. It is no wonder then, as Miss Deren points out, that they hold fast to beliefs that provide either immediate help or the inner strength to endure in the face of rude realities.

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Because of their harsh existence, they feel strongly that every bit of accumulated human wisdom must be preserved for the benefit of the living. Since the spirits of the dead become loa (gods), they may be called upon for advice and help when human resources are unavailing. Accordingly, great care is taken to perform the proper ceremonies to release the spirits of the dead so that they may join the great cosmic entity made up of greater and lesser gods. If the loa are expected to provide for the faithful, they are in turn served by them. Thus a practical and satisfying relationship of mutual respect is maintained.

The houngans and mambos (priests and priestesses) hold an important position in the communities, for they act as intermediaries in establishing contact between the people and the loa, whether with the greater gods (those of African inheritance) or with the lesser ones who have since joined the ranks.

A chart of the classification of Voudoun loa according to principle, origin, and character is given on pages 82 and 83. The major ceremonies are the Rada rites, characterized by benevolent loa, and the Petro rites, characterized by magical and malevolent loa.

The author states in her preface that she is grateful for the existence of the people and the religion, for "the fact that such a culture exists is, in itself, a good." Quite apart from this, the insight gained here into the philosophy of the Haitians who adhere to the Voudoun religion can be meaningful to those who would make their life more bearable.

The physical and moral attributes of the "divine horsemen" are described in great detail and sometimes with humor, as are the important ceremonies of initiation, the feeding of the loa, and the rites for the dead and for the reclamation of their souls a year after death. Some of the other points considered are the importance of the ritual as a collective discipline and as a factor in the development of the individual; the contrast between religion and magic; Christian and Indian influences in Voudoun; the drums and the dance; and the role of the houngan as healer.

If we are to believe Mr. Joseph Campbell, the editor of the series to which this volume belongs, "All mythology, whether of the folk or of the literati, preserves the iconography of a spiritual adventure that men have been accomplishing for millenia, and which, when it occurs, reveals such constant features that the innumerable mythologies of the world resemble each other as dialects of a single language." Miss Deren chooses to term as evidence of Indian influence what might soundly be termed evidence of similarity and coincidence. For she amplifies the thesis advanced by Dr. Louis Maximilien in "Le Vodou Haitien," published in Haiti in 1945—that there are traces of Indian influences in the Petro rites. In the appen-

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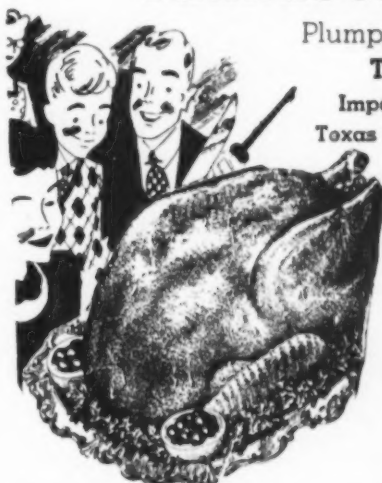
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dix to the book, Miss Deren supports the thesis by many examples of objects and words which seem to resemble objects and words in various Indian cultures. While these signs of influence are presented as tentative, in the body of the book we read: "What emerges from this research is the fact that the African culture in Haiti was saved by the Indian culture, which, in the Petro cult, provided the Negroes with divinities sufficiently aggressive to be the moral force behind the Revolution."

This is certainly an oversimplification of the picture and a serious deviation from the logic of the rest, which carries the reader to the dramatic climax of the last chapter—the author's own experience of being possessed by the great Erzulie, the Voudoun goddess of love.

The book is written in clear graphic style and is amply illustrated with reproductions of vevers—the symbolic designs drawn on the ground with corn or wheat flour or ashes to invoke the loa at ceremonies—and a number of very remarkable photographs taken by the author.

E. T. M

GOLDEN CONQUEST. By Helen Lobbell Illustrated by Seymour Fleishman. 215 pp Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

IN 1519 Juan Christophe de Martinez, a young Spaniard, and Catalina, an Indian girl whom he had befriended, sailed from Cuba as members of Cortez' expedition to Mexico. Juan, a devout Christian, was convinced that Cortez' main purpose was to plant Christianity in the New World. After battles, intrigue and imprisonment the boy gradually realized that his leader was more interested in gold and booty than in spreading the word of God. Juan's struggle to resolve in his own mind the conflict in Cortez' motives, and his efforts to reconcile the good and evil which he sees in the doomed Aztecs, provide a theme which lifts this book above the average swashbuckling tale of adventure and romance.

The characters are convincing, the settings unusual and the rapid, direct style is well-suited to the extraordinary but seldom improbable episodes. The sum of these parts is a fast-moving, sometimes blood-curdling tale of an age which was not for the faint-hearted.

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Current Attractions

NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

By Vane C Dalton

IN MANY respects the season of concerts offered through the past weeks by the National Symphony Orchestra at the Palacio de Bellas Artes has been unique, novel and highly audacious. In presenting this season the new administration of the I.N.B.A. (National Institute of Fine Arts) has, it seems, decided to attempt a hazardous gamble, a daring experiment, by completely departing from precedent, and thereby hoping to restore this orchestra's gravely impaired prestige.

To begin with, the orchestra performed this season without a titular director, the seven programs it presented having been assigned to almost that many guest conductors. On the other hand, the programs were almost entirely devoid of the usual classical favorites and were made up mostly of works by contemporary composers. Indeed, in this modern aggregate, the inclusion of Mozart's "Magic Flute" overture in the first program, of a Joann Christian Bach symphony and a Beethoven concerto in the third, and of a Chopin concerto in the fifth seemed almost to be anachronistic concessions. For the rest of the season's program was formed of works by Copland, Revueltas, Anzaldúa, Chausson, Berlioz, William Schumann, Paredes Pérez, Frescobaldi, Poulenc, Villalobos, Albeniz-Ponce, Stravinsky, Galindo, Santa Cruz, Adomian and Prokofieff.

Hence it may be seen that the organizers of this season were not seeking to score an easy triumph by

appealing to popular tastes. On the contrary, they seem to have been determined to achieve a success by boldly challenging established predilections, by obtaining, if possible, public approval on their own terms, without catering to its tastes. It may be said, in fact, that this season had been planned upon purely artistic concerns, by totally ignoring the law of supply and demand and without lending serious considerations to the box-office.

Therefore, it was clear at the outset that the I.N.B.A., putting aside on this occasion all pursuit of commercial success, was mainly guided by the aim to carry out a bold experiment, a decisive test, which would serve to determine the future course of this orchestra. And in this respect, I am convinced that the venture was completely justified.

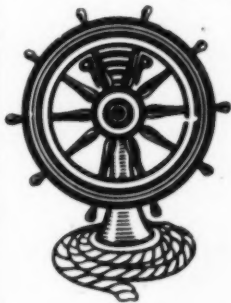
The National Symphony Orchestra—successor of the Symphony Orchestra of Mexico, which was created by Carlos Chávez in 1928 and disbanded by him twenty years later, and which had been truly a product of this one man's initiative, dedication and genius—has not been able, through the various years of its existence, to duly establish itself in the place it theoretically holds. For after twenty years of stability resting on this one-man rule, it found itself virtually acephalous when this man abandoned his post at its helm. José Pablo Moncayo, whom Chavez selected to succeed him, despite considerable ability, could never fill his place. As result, the prestige of this ensemble, made up of excellent talent, commenced to decline.

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Obviously, if this orchestra was destined to survive, the new administration had to create a new policy and choose a new course. Tacitly acknowledging the painful fact that Mexico lacks at this time a native conductor who could take the place of Chavez, or whose stature might be commensurate with this highly responsible task, the I.N.B.A., whose Department of Music is headed by Jesús Durón, decided to entrust this season to a group of distinguished guest conductors,—that is, Aaron Copland, Robert Lawrence, Guillermo Espinosa, Abel Eisenberg and Lan Adomian.

And although, to judge from appearances, this boldly experimental season had not been a commercial success, it has undoubtedly been an impressive artistic achievement. Public attendance, which at the opening concert was deplorably small, gradually increased with each successive program, reaching an average attendance toward the end. And whatever might be said regarding the programs (I must confess that by and large I found them somewhat disconcerting), the performance of the orchestra as well as of the various soloists (the inclusion of a different soloist in each program had been another novel feature of the season) has been excellent throughout. The orchestra, revealing a fine adaptability, coped admirably with the difficult test of performing each week under distinct leadership. Executing works that do not arouse a facile response, that were indeed at times completely beyond the grasp of the average listener, this orchestra was invariably rewarded with well-earned generous applause.

Beyond the thoroughly satisfactory performance of the orchestra, the highlights of the season were provided by the superb execution of the various soloists. In the opening program, the young Mexican violinist Enrique Serratos, appearing with the orchestra in Chaussou's Poem for a Violin and an Orchestra, fascinated the audience with his surprising technical maturity and the sheer beauty of his playing. In the third program, José Kahan, another young musician of mature attainments, drew abundant applause for his splendid performance of Beethoven's Fourth Concerto for a Piano and Orchestra. In the fourth

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program, Jesús Estrada, as soloist in Poulenc's Concerto for an Organ and Orchestra, received a veritable ovation and was obliged by the audience to render several encores. The pianist Bernardo Segall, executing the Fourth Concerto for a Piano and Orchestra by Vilalobos, in the sixth program conducted by Lan Odorian, likewise profoundly impressed his audience.

Of the various conductors, I am inclined to believe that the personality of Guillermo Espinosa was the most outstanding. Conducting the third and fourth programs he demonstrated a vigorous temperament, a solid professional skill, a full command of the orchestra, a facility for reading the score, and, finally, a personal attractiveness.

Of the works which were received with greatest appreciation, I might list "Appalachian Spring," conducted by its composer Aaron Copland in the opening program, and the Suite for an Orchestra "Israel," composed and conducted by Lan Adorian, which formed part of the sixth.

It would be hazardous to speculate regarding the ultimate effect of this season on the future progress of the National Symphony Orchestra. But I am sure it is quite safe to assert that it has given our public—to be sure, the more intrepid sector of our public—a highly interesting, a most unusual and on the whole amply rewarding musical experience.



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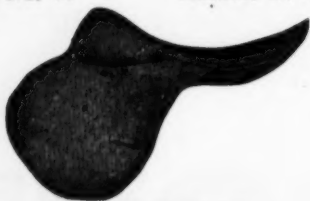
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Art Events

THE Exposition of Mexican Art, covering all its epochs, which is being organized by the National Institute of Fine Arts and is to be inaugurated in the course of this month, may be regarded as the most important event of its kind in our art annals. Both in quantity and quality of assembled objects this exposition surpasses any other that has ever been undertaken in our midst. Extending through the rest of this year and all of 1954, this exposition might eventually serve as the basis for a new, permanent and authentic museum of national art.

Although the structure of the Palace of Fine Arts had not been originally planned for this purpose, a small army of engineers, architects and artists are working at this time in the adaptation of its three floors, through both wings for this major exhibition.

Consisting of three main sections—pre-Classical, Classical and Historical—the exposition will occupy twenty salons, subdivided into sections of archaeology, sculpture, painting and minor arts. Its scope will cover four thousand years. It will include the works that were exhibited in Paris, Stockholm and London, as well as many others that had never been shown before.

The left wing of the Palace of Fine Arts will accommodate in its first section the finest examples of pre-Hispanic art, such as monumental sculpture and mural paintings, with reproductions of most important works from all the principal archaeological regions of the Republic, such as Tepalatlán, Chichén Itzá, Bonampak, Atetelco, Tizatlán and other sites.

The right wing will present a collection of Colonial art, consisting mainly of such works which reveal the fusion of European and indigenous influence, and which provided one of the main sources for the modern expression. The finest specimens of 17th., 18th. and 19th century Mexican paintings have been assembled for this section.

Next to this section will be the one assigned to popular arts, presenting pre-Hispanic, Colonial, European and Oriental specimens in garments, ceramics, ritualistic objects, retablos and masks.

The section assigned to contemporary art will include the works by every Mexican painter, engraver and sculptor of note, from Orozco and Rivera to Celia Calderón.

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THE city's newest and in many respects the most appropriately situated and appointed exhibition sa'lon, Galeria Velazquez (Avenida Independencia No. 68) offered during the first fortnight of the past month a show of paintings in oil by Demetrio Llor-den. Through the following fortnight this gallery presented an extensive selection of landscapes and figure compositions by the Mexican master Armando García Nuñez.

AN unusually interesting group of paintings in a combined medium of tempera and oil over Masonite, by the local artist Nishizawa, is being currently shown at the Salon de la Plastica Mexicana (Calle de Puebla No. 154). Nishizawa, a Mexican of Japanese extraction, is a superb colorist and designer, as well as a notable craftsman. The paintings which comprise this exhibit include typical scenes from Tehuantepec, landscapes of the Valley of Mexico, portraits and still life.

MARIA IZQUIERDO, one of the most distinguished among the Mexican women painters of our time, is showing at present a collection of her newer work at the Casa del Arquitecto (Avenida Veracruz No. 24).

THE GALERIA SAN ANGEL (Dr. Galvez 25, Villa Obregón) presented in the course of the foregoing month a group of abstract drawings and paintings by Nicolas Muzenie.



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NOW on exhibition on the main floor of the Mexican-North American Cultural Institute (Avenida Yucatán No. 63) are the paintings of Mexico by Robert Bauer, native of Cincinnati, Ohio, who for a number of years has been living and working at San Miguel Allende.

A SMALL though quite interesting group of paintings by the local artist José Gutierrez is on exhibit during the first fortnight of the present month at the Casino del Arte (Calle de Milán No. 28).

REPRESENTATIVE works by a group of outstanding contemporary Mexican painters loaned by five local exhibit galleries—Ars, Arte Moderno, Arte Contemporaneo, Prisse and San Angel—make up the current show at the Saloncito Gallery of the Mexico City College (Avenida Jalapa No. 147).

A LARGE and varied collection of paintings in various mediums by gifted non-professional artists is being exhibited during this month at the Hotel Francis (Paseo de la Reforma No. 64).

KARIN VAN LEYDEN, a Dutch artist who is at present residing in Mexico, is showing a group of abstract compositions at the Galeria de Arte Mexicano (Calle de Milán No. 18).

Un Poco de Todo

Continued from page 31

from the use of these illegal immigrants are apparently trying to exert counterpressure for an easier policy.

The problem of the "wetback" goes back for many years, of course. Poverty-stricken peons in Mexico look longingly at the higher standards prevalent in



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the United States. Employers hunting for cheap labor look longingly at the Mexican reservoir of farm workers. For years the union of the two forces has produced a labor supply which works under as terrible conditions as are to be found in the U.S., and whose members—being there illegally—have no recourse against injustice or mistreatment.

The United States Government has attempted to meet the Southwest's farm labor problem by contracting with the Mexican Government for the legal import of workers, with guarantees given that these workers' conditions will meet at least minimum standards. Under the claim of a "labor shortage" some farm employers are seeking to scrap this system for one which would legalize the entry of the "wetbacks." The history of the use of this kind of migrant labor in the Southwest suggests that the "shortage" is not one of labor absolutely, but rather of labor which is willing to work under the hardest conditions for sub-standard pay. We commend Mr. Brownell's policy, and trust that no political pressures will undermine the promising beginning already made toward a sounder relationship on this matter between the two friendly neighbor nations.

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According to the geophysicists the Earth is between two and four billion years old. It takes about 5,000 million years for one-half the uranium originally in the Earth to turn into lead. The physicist has only to know how much lead is now in the Earth to arrive at this figure of between two and four billion years. Measurements of the extent of the expanding universe and estimates of the rate of expansion are not accurate, but, such as they are, astronomers have deduced from them that the universe cannot be older than 1.8 billion years.



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This long-standing difference of opinion between geophysicists and astronomers has been momentarily settled by Drs. Walter Baade and Harold Weaver of the University of California. A year or so ago Dr. Baade presented enough evidence to show that prevailing estimates of the age and size of the universe were incorrect, whereupon Dr. Weaver went over the ground again, using the Cepheid variables (pulsating stars) and galactic star clusters as yardsticks. Dr. Weaver's calculations show that the distance of the Earth from the center of our galaxy is not the supposed 29,000 light-years but more than twice as much. So the universe is twice as old and twice as big as we thought it was, and the Earth and the universe are each about two billion years old.

The work of Drs. Baade and Weaver indicates again how restless the human mind is. For centuries men have gazed at the stars and wondered how far off they are and how big is the vault above. Estimated stellar distances have been steadily increasing since ancient times. To the Greeks the "fixed stars" were only a few thousand miles away. Now stellar distances must be measured in astronomical units so large that we have to think of light from some stars traveling a whole geologic period before it reaches us. The measurement of these distances is an intellectual feat of the highest order. We owe much to Prof. Harlow Shapley, the late Henrietta S. Leavitt and Prof. Einar Hertzsprung for having shown that wherever there is a Cepheid variable the distance of the globular cluster in which it pulsates can be deduced. Dr. Weaver has refined the method and reached a result that is of historic importance in the history of astronomy.

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Ever since the electronic computers or "thinking machines" were introduced, soon after the war, we have been hearing about the automatic factory. The trend toward automaticity was apparent long before the computers were devised. There are contrivances that will feel metal and peel off a thousandth of an inch of excess material or stamp out fenders at a blow. The ideal is the automatic factory which will turn out



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The thousands who visited last month the eighth annual National Instrument Conference and Exhibit in Chicago must have been impressed by the evidence of this impending nearly perfect automaticity. Automatic machines that will turn out such products as bolts and screws by the thousand in a few hours are old. But what of the installation at Chicago that picked up automobile-engines in the rough and went to work on them with half a dozen electronically controlled machines simultaneously? What of the petroleum refinery, which has dispensed with much human supervision and in which chemical processes, flow of oil-fractions, catalytic reactions—everything is controlled by mechanism, with the result that there are few workers in sight?

According to the new philosophy of invention that has been inspired by the electronic computers, the real business of the inventor is to devise ways that will enable a machine to communicate its orders to an organization of gears and levers or instruments. "Communication engineering," this is called. The connection and telephoning is there, but to is the connection with the thermostat that tells auxiliary mechanism when to turn the heat on or off, and so are the holes in the top of a washbasin that crudely tells the water it may rise so high and no higher. The inventor of today has no patience with robots—mechanical duplicates of men. He learned long ago that an automatic machine does not have to imitate all that a man does. It is enough to deal with single functions, such as measuring temperatures or thickness of material or detecting flaws material or sorting perfect from imperfect articles.

The instruments and machines that feel, hear, see, measure with an accuracy that senses can never attain had to be invented because the human being has his limitations. What was exhibited at Chicago was a preview of supersensitivity as well as of automaticity. The two are inseparable.



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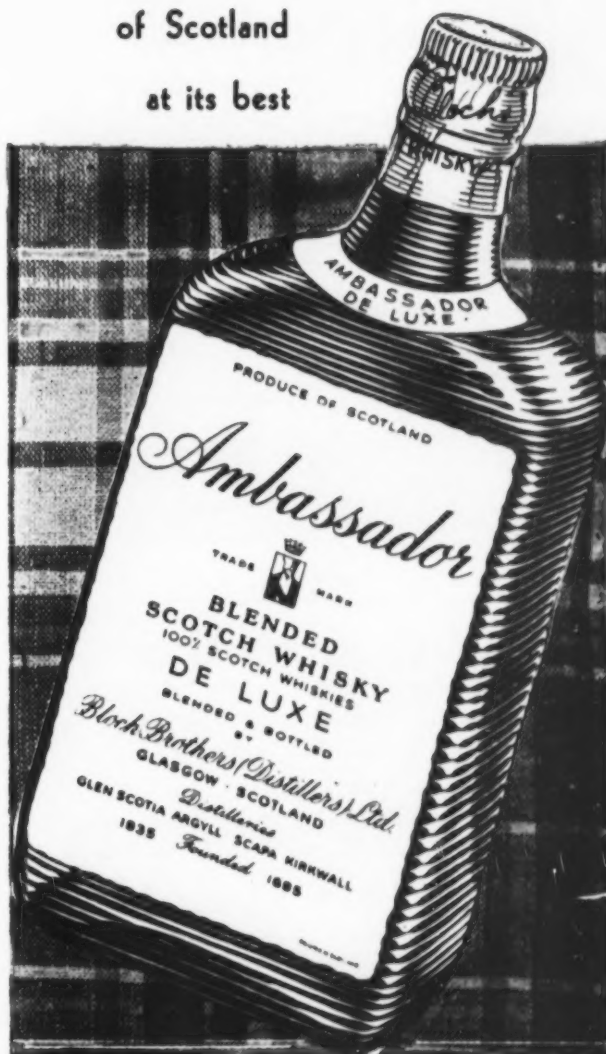
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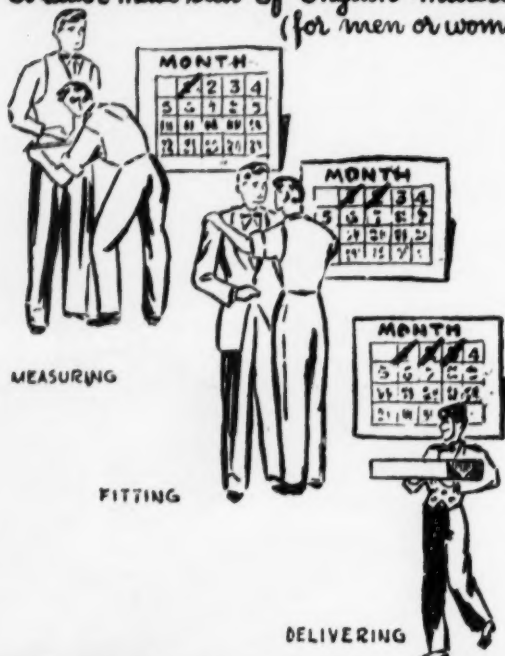
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Continued from page 20

most commonplace and most insignificant things and to tell it in such way that it becomes luminous and thereby significant.

The idea is to scrap the whole thing and start on something else—start something new. Here I am moving again. I am on my way. I've extricated myself from a static interlude. I've survived this glorious sojourn in Arcadia. I've shaken off the lethargy. Yes, they'll be wondering, asking—what the hell happened to Harry? They'll resent my departure as if it implied a kind of betrayal, as if I had broken a pact, as if I had wantonly sneaked away and abandoned a beleaguered camp in a moment of peril.

It seemed weird to him now how within a single day the place which he had come to regard as a friendly refuge, the people who comprised a tiny world—on the whole a quite pleasant and compatible world— which he accepted as his own, receded into a remote distance, became alien, incongruous and detached. Is it possible, he asked himself, that I have been dwelling in a kind of void—that I have found shelter in oblivion, that I have been wallowing in a stagnant pool, existing in an emotional and intellectual vacuum—and that now, having at last dragged myself away from it, am beginning to perceive the truth, am beginning to see it precisely as it is?

Let's look at it this way: people gravitate to a place; they are mutually drawn to each other not merely through casual wayside encounter. There must be some innate bond, some community of interest or purpose, some underlying affinity. What then was the unfathomable force that held us together? By what mysterious, distinct and twisted paths did we drift from our diverse sources to this same particular place? What was the motivation behind the plot? Obviously, either the clinging to some obscure illusion, or, and which is more probable, disillusion, loss, frustration, the yearning for recompense in escape and surrender, of fulfillment through capitulation. In

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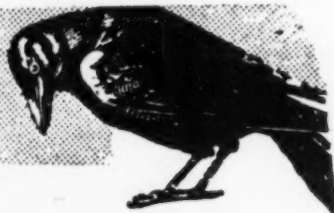
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other words, I suppose—much as in my case—it all amounts to a flight from desolation and the unconscious pursuit of some kind of new faith.

As I look at it now, though I was unaware of it before, that was the one specific thing we had in common. As different as we were externally, intrinsically we were much closer to each other than we ever knew. The inertia, the apparent impasse, had been brought on by spiritual bereavement, by a destitution of values, by an inner emptiness, or, as in my own case, by some overpowering ordeal and ensuing confusion. Our tropical Elysium had been a kind of blind alley from which one may escape only through a recovered capacity to believe in something.

This might be an idealization. Surely, I could lump them all into a simple damning designation. There we were, vegetating in Cuernavaca—a handful of boozy intellectuals, verseless poetasters, escaped advertising writers, playless dramatists, painters who have forgotten what or how to paint. There we were, an apparently kindred and homogeneous group, strangely tolerating—perhaps because at heart each of us resented this base homogeneity—the fellowship of such outlandish intruders as Hugh and Zelda Cotterell—two classical characters for banal fiction—the aging debauchée and his young and comely wife. Indeed, we welcomed them because they were so completely unlike ourselves.

Funny that I did not see them—not even as copy material. But there we were, a group of ultra-civilized outcasts performing a delightful tableau amid a fittingly exotic background. Each carrying out his own specific role contributed a perfectly logical share to a consistent general theme. There was a play, a cast of actors and a stage. A point and counter-point, a plot and counter-plot, a sequence of separate and seemingly disconnected episodes, all somehow becoming interlaced in a total ultimate theme.

So now, he mused on, that I have gone away I might be able to take a closer look at them; I might at least be able to perceive the essence of the most obvious of them—the Cotterells, our delightful intruders. I might size them up with a degree of precision. Hugh

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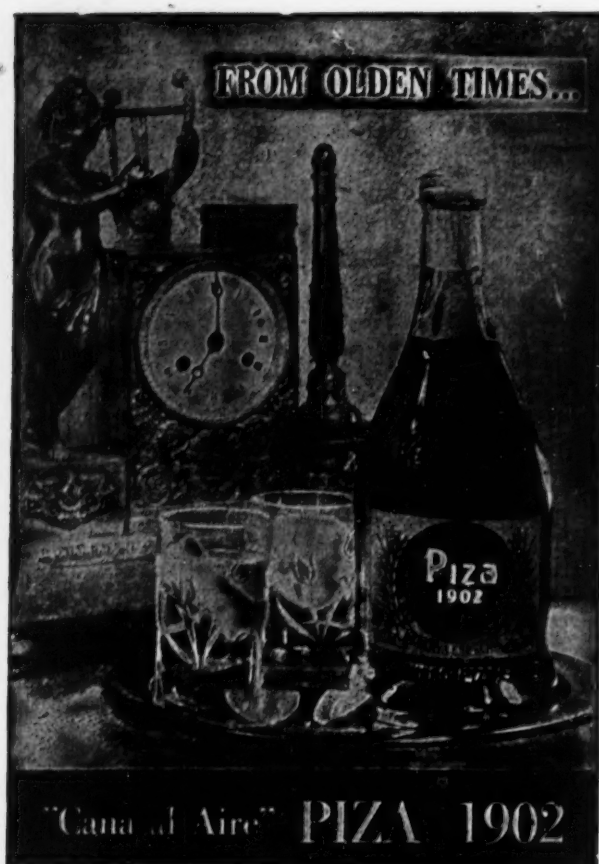
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—a giant not yet fully gone flabby. A wildeatter that had never been completely tamed. Pumped millions out of gushing oil wells. Made and lost fortunes. A man with a booming voice and a hearty laugh and little, sparkling predatory eyes and an eternally perspiring bulbous face. A lion who had stalked his game in the jungle and was now hitched to a lynx. Life had been always a game of chance, and now Zelda—his fourth or fifth wife—was his final gamble. Auburn hair, huge, cat-like eyes—a ravishing package. An ex-movie extra, an ex-model, an ex... hell, an ex ex. That's the setup.

So they started out somewhere on a leisurely cruise in a cozy little yacht. No fixed destination; no schedule; just roving along through the blue Pacific. Calling at a port here and there to replenish supplies or to loaf for a while on some secluded beach. Just drifting about without a care in the world, with nothing to intrude on their tryst; just a man and a woman reverted to an elemental existence, enjoying a protracted idyl.

They would have most likely bypassed the gaudy bay of Acapulco, for it had been their purpose to shun as far as possible all contact with civilization, had it not been for engine trouble. They were compelled to go in for repairs. But then it turned out that some parts that had to be replaced could not be obtained in Acapulco and would have to be ordered from the States, and this would keep them anchored for at least a fortnight. Then it developed that when after a considerable delay the parts finally arrived they were not precisely the right kind or could not be properly adjusted. At any rate, Zelda, it seemed, did not find this exposure to civilization too disagreeable; the swanky hotels, the gay night clubs and fashionable beaches provided a delightful change. Hence, leaving the disabled yacht moored in the bay, finding among the tourists a gay set of companions, they fell into a routine of high conviviality. Zelda stood the pace admirably; but after a time Hugh commenced to suffer with dysentery, and this made them finally decide to seek a milder clime. They came to Cuernava-

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ca, and apparently forgetting all about the yacht, stayed on.

* * *

It was odd, Boyd thought, that the Cotterells, disdaining more eligible and fitting associations, which Cuernavaca could amply provide, should fall in with his own freakish crowd, that they would deliberately choose for themselves this bizarre and disreputable milieu. But then, what with Zelda's Hollywood background and a penchant for being regarded as a sort of an artist, she probably felt more at home in this kind of a midst. And as to Hugh, away from his normal jungle habitat, he seemed to lack a fixed point of social orientation, and meekly followed in Zelda's lead. To be sure, their intrusion seemed odd only at the beginning, for it soon became apparent that it was not accidental, that it was Lou Taggart who provided a definite reason—that is to say, it was Zelda's sudden inspiration to learn to paint under Lou's instruction. As to the rest of them, they merely formed a propitious background. They were the supernumeraries.

It was diverting henceforth to observe the ensuing burletta, to perceive Lou and Zelda enacting their parts, performing their transparent stratagems, to behold the perilous procedure, the ancient game of cuckoldry delightfully unwinding before their eyes; it was amusing as well as depressing to behold the pathetic, bewildered Hugh, cast in his ignominious role, chafe impotently, confounded by a bale or a menace he sensed without perceiving, harassed like an ox stung by invisible wasps.

They were a calloused and cynical crowd, and what they witnessed did not affect them deeply. And yet, maybe because in some way, quite inadvertently, if only by tacitly shielding the culprits, by feigning innocence, by staunchly guarding the secret from the immediately offended parties, they all became involved in it, the shabby episode acquired importance. Though it all adhered to a formal pattern—it indeed seemed perfectly logical, almost inevitable, that Hugh would meet with this kind of ignoble plight—it developed rather complex repercussions, for Lou had a wife and a child, and very little in the way of an income, while



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his liaison with Zelda seemed much deeper than a mere infatuation. It boded an unpredictable denouement.

So, while providing, so to speak, a passive background, while each was engaged in his own particular game of trivial sordidness, this major sordidness took them away from themselves; it gave them something to worry about, something to gloat over.

He walked out on them before it reached its tragic or hilarious finale, and he realized that it mattered to him little how it would end, but as he dwelled on it now the seedy affair emerged in a new light: it assumed an endless web of vital implications. Its essential significance, its specific meaning, transcended the obvious trivial plot, it rose above its shabby characters, its locale and its action. Hugh and Zelda, Lou and his wife, were minor actors—they were mere symbols in a play whose scope was vastly greater than its immediate plot or the parts they enacted. They and the crowd which harbored them and provided their audience were just an assortment of small and forlorn people helplessly caught in a morass, a crowd of marooned derelicts grasping for something that might bring them back to firm soil, fumbling for some new

light, new strength or faith, hiding for a while in this balmy oasis, finding a precarious and ephemeral refuge on this friendly island amid a devastated world.

And as his mind shaped these metaphoric terms, the varied sights of Cuernavaca passed in broken fragments through his vision like so many jumbled bits of a cut-out puzzle, fell into a compact design, into an abstract montage, assumed the lucid form of a verdant oasis, of a dreamlike Elysian garden, of a lush green microcosm, then reduced itself to a final visual synthesis wherein the whole panorama became focused in a single image. It was a clear and incisive image, probably springing from actual memory, of a rotten-ripe mango dropping off a tree.

God, he thought, this is something I must think about—something I must probe, get into... Yes, even perhaps write about... This is something that... And the thought, obscure and inchoate, suddenly verging on a clew, an idea, a creative impulse, sent a sharp ray of warmth through his brain and a minute thrill through his body—a sensation he had not known in a very long time. God, he thought, I might be crawling out of the morass myself.

Broken Dishes

Continued from page 19

"I have always done it that way," she said, chewing her hubble gum. "No coriander?"

"I don't like coriander."

"You will know, pues, It won't have any flavor without coriander."

She made herself agreeable to the other servants, but they all disliked her and never missed an opportunity to bitch her.

"She comes from over the hill," said Cayetano. "They're bad people over there. That's the village where the bandits come from."

"That Apolonia," said Lola, "says she knows to do many things, but she washes the plates with soap, and the flavor falls bad to me. I am ill; I cannot eat here any more."

"And she has broken many of those little cups of two sides we use for eggs," said Nieves. "I saw her. She is a great finisher off of dishes."

"She likes men," hissed Aurora. "Don't say I said so, but that's why Obdulia left."

I didn't take much notice of what they said, but a day or two later, passing the rubbish pit, I noticed all the bits of broken ollas and casuelas, and thought it was time to speak to Apolonia about it again.

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"You really ought to take more care, you know," I said. "This earthenware is very fragile, and everything is much more expensive now."

"Pues," said Apolonia with a sigh, "it gives me much pain to tell you, señor, but on Sunday I leave for my village. My village is ugly, very ugly, but I say it's pretty because it's my home, and there I have a field of tomatoes. And everyone there is healthy, they stay well—that is, if God wills it. And everywhere there is much water, a river that hardly ever dries up and many little eyes of sweet water so fresh and so blue that you might think it was—I don't know how to say it—so blue you might think it was full of white soap. And at the entrance of the barranca there is a rock, and all day long it is weeping water. Oh, yes, you can get there by bus and it is called Saint John of the Little Straw Mats.

Sometimes people even go there on purpose."

I said I was sorry she wanted to leave.

"I am sorry, too, señor, about the dishes. But what would the poor dish makers do, puesen, if we didn't break a dish from time in when? I know about dish making, pues."

Collecting Reptiles

Continued from page 22

was named for me, by the American Museum, thus assuring me everlasting fame in the annals of herpetology, or something.

* * *

The Gila monsters were the toughest things to handle, and to kill. The natives were very superstitious about these, and although they snared them and brought them in on the ends of long poles, they would never touch one, even if it was dead. I had "drowned" a particularly large specimen one afternoon, and was preparing him for preservation, when a couple of fellows came in with a live boa constrictor. It was a baby, about six feet long, and in fine shape. I paid



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them two pesos for it and went on with my work, while they sat on the rock fence and watched. The whole thing mystified and fascinated them. My instructions were, in the case of the larger reptiles, to remove the internal organs, but to make a note of the contents of the stomachs, on the tag. This particular fellow had just robbed a nest of Douglas quail, and had fifteen unbroken eggs in his stomach. A few of these had been slightly punctured by his needlelike teeth, but the rest were apparently quite fresh. I had finished making my notes, and cleaning everything out of the two-and-a-half-foot reptile, including the heart and lungs. I dropped him in the can of mescal, and turned my attention to the writhing boa. Just then one of the boys let out a yell and fell backward off the fence. The other one just sat there frozen, staring wide-eyed at something behind me. I turned to see the drowned "and completely empty Gila monster walking directly toward me, snapping his jaws together like a steel trap with every few wabby steps. The stimulating powers of that mescal had been proven again. I have the word of four other Americans, and a yardful of villagers, that the big reptile walked about the yard for about ten minutes, snapping at sticks that were thrust in front of him, and appearing to see and hear. It was a nasty sight. I have caught several Gila monsters with my bare hands, without a qualm. They are sluggish and clumsy, but catching this fellow and returning him to the preserving can was one of the most distasteful things I have ever been forced to do. It was like picking up a ghost.

I was never harmed by any of the reptiles, and none of the boys were ever bitten, even by the harmless varieties. They saw to that. There was one snake called a "pechequate" that the boys insisted whistled instead of hissing, and struck backward, anchoring its tail in the ground with a hornlike point. I kept raising my offer for a specimen of this until it finally

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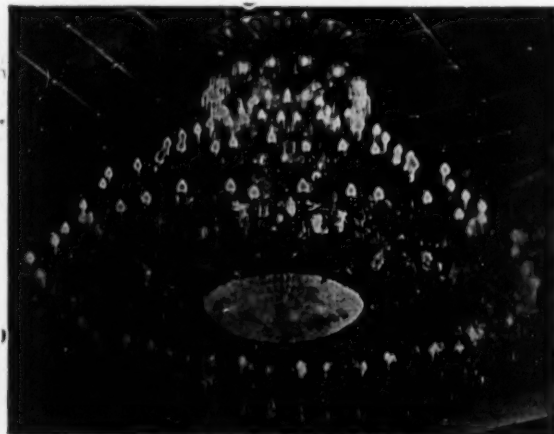
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reached ten pesos. Three badly battered ones were finally brought in, but there was enough left to get a pretty good idea of what they looked like. The boys were right about the horn on the tail; and the snake was obviously poisonous, from the shape of its head. Its body was wide and flat, like a big fat ribbon, and repulsive in appearance and odor. The first one they brought me gave forth such a violent stench that I thought it was rotten, and almost refused to buy it. The others were still twitching but had the same odor.

Mr. Bogert informed me that the snake belonged to the same family as the water moccasin; but my native friends insist that it is never found anywhere except in the driest tops of the hills. I hope to see one of these snakes alive, and bring some back for study, someday, but it will be a project in itself.

A visitor to the ranch would probably have taken one look at the variety of reptiles I had preserved, and decided the place was not safe for a white man. On the contrary, we rode all over the country and hiked at least a hundred miles that summer, and the only poisonous things I ever saw and caught in the brush were a couple of slow-moving Gila monsters, who did their level best to get away from me.

The only other poisonous reptile I caught was a tiny bright-colored snake I found one morning in the middle of the village. It was so brilliant in hue and so shiny with its newly changed skin that I kept it alive for about a week. It became very tame and I fed it small worms and insects. Never once, even when I first caught it, did it offer to bite. The reptile-hating members of the household though this little "king snake" was the prettiest specimen I had collected. I really hesitated to kill and preserve it; but it was the only one. After I returned to the States and

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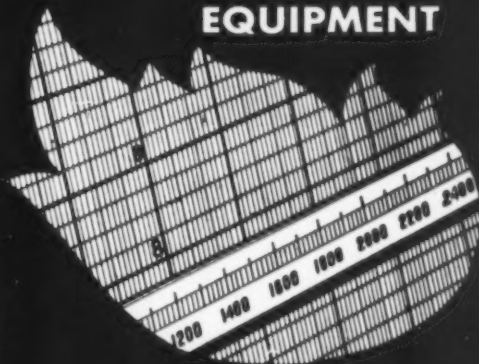
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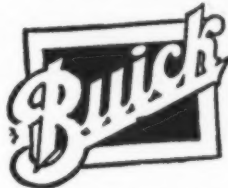
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the museum had made out a check list of the specimens, I noticed they listed "one coral snake" under the poisonous reptiles. I had to look at the number in my field notes before I could believe that this was the mild-natured, bright-colored little pet that I had hated to kill. "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing."

Governmental Finance

Continued from page 24

yond limits of the various department involved. Some 229 million pesos of such financing with contractors' funds will be charged against next year's budget. Obviously, that type of financing should be used warily or, better, not at all.

From the foregoing however, it is evident that President Aleman had a sound basis for concluding in his 1951 state-of-the-nation address that "Mexico's credit maintains a firm position," Barring unforeseen international contingencies and assuming continuation of present acceptable fiscal policies under conditions of relative political stability, the Mexican government apparently has become a good credit risk, in sharp contrast to its earlier history of debt defaults.

The Great Varón

Continued from page 18

conceived or at least unconsciously adopted a grandiose scheme for getting away from these inequalities.

If you had the money to buy and diligently explore most of the best mines in a district or two at the same time, would not one or more of them be in bonanza at all times and everybody have a wonderful time? This theory Borda proceeded to try out, and after he had expended most of his fortune the thing came off, resulting in ten most glamorous years for himself and for Taxco. He took out from a million and a half to two millions and a half pesos each year during the period, and that from a district which up to then, taking one century with another, had rarely produced even a half-million pesos in any one year. There is much question as to whether some of the figures were gross or net, but the eighteenth century New Spaniard was not too fussy about such distinctions.

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Don Jose's Taxco mining operations lack some of the technical interest of the contemporaneous exploits of the Count of the Valenciana at Guanajuato or of the Count of Regla at Pachuca. It must, however have been an extraordinary scene. First came the ore-carriers crawling like intermittent ants out of a hundred holes in the hill-sides. Each carried from a hundred and fifty to three hundred pounds of rock in a rough-woven sack on his shoulders, having brought it up hundreds of feet vertically on rickety "chicken ladders." Each considered himself a "professional" and was ready to pour his scorn and indignation on anyone who dared to suggest that he handle a shovel or a timber! As many as a thousand of these ore-carriers or "teneteros" were employed in the larger mines in New Spain and they brought incredible tonnages to the surface. Probably Borda's operations underground were not extensive enough for his foremen to employ the Guanajuato system of "caballitos" or "little horses," these being Indians who carried them on their backs through the workings. There must, however, have been dozens of charcoal fires glowing throughout the mines. At these the steel was sharpened, regardless of the deadly fume generated.

On the surface the "teneteros" turned the ore over to the ore sorters before they returned to the depths. The latter squatted just outside the mine openings, their hammers descending endlessly and their keen eyes glued on the disintegrating rock. Their accuracy was uncanny and they could judge the ore within an ounce or two of silver to the ton. These ore-sorters were all dressed in something approximating white pajamas and when they discarded their blankets in the warmth of the morning they resembled a group of slightly soiled angels busy in assaying of human souls.

* * *

The ore-sorters turned over the selected ore for transportation by the light-boned mules and these, sorely overburdened, daintily trod the narrow and precipitous trails to the amalgamation works. After the long agony of the "patio" process, the silver bars were ready for Borda's famous and gaily-caparisoned bullion train. This consisted of still more mules in charge of the fierce "arrieos" or muleteers who led a strange half savage life entirely under the sun and the stars. And so on to the Royal Mint in the Imperial City of Mexico.

It is not hard to imagine Don Jose de la Borda himself rushing around directing these operations. Although a modest and simple man in many ways, he of course had a fine horse and his saddle and bridle were inlaid with splendid hand-wrought silver and gold. And no doubt his suit was slashed with fine China silk brought over in the Manila galleon. His eyes were sharp for any deviation from the long-established mining ritual of operation, and every centavo must be accounted for. But he was also constantly



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on the look-out for anyone to whom he could reasonably give largess. He never used the old Spanish phrase "Pardon me, brother, for the love of God" but gave and gave until it hurt—hurt, not Borda, but his "noble, loyal and Christian" administrators, who were quite sure that his generosity would eventually impoverish him, and them. But these gentlemen found that protesting was like putting "frenos al viento"—bridles on the wind!

Borda now proceeded with the cherished dream of his life—the construction of the parish church at Taxco. This task took seven years and was gravely stated to have cost the equivalent of eighty seven thousand five hundred and seven pounds sterling, odd shillings and pence. But for some occult reason this detailed figure did not include the lime or the steel used in construction, the ornamentation, or the enormous East Indian carpet wangled up somehow from Acapulco by the muleteers. One diamond and silver studded chalice was later sold for a hundred thousand pesos. The total cost to Borda was certainly over a million. There followed the construction of innumerable bridges between towns with unpronounceable names, roads, fountains, aqueducts. Borda was, in addition, "father of the orphans' asylum of the young ladies, councillor of the widows, healer of the sick and succor of the necessitous." For himself, he often said that his hopes "were in the pocket of God"—quite a deft phrase for a pocket miner!

Humboldt, gossipy for once, states that Borda earlier had forced his daughter Teresa to become a nun so that he could leave all his fortune to his son, Ramon, and that Ramon later voluntarily became a priest. Be that as it may, both children were now dignitaries of the Catholic Church and there could be no thought of hereditary fortune. So why should not Borda indulge his mania for giving? He often said,

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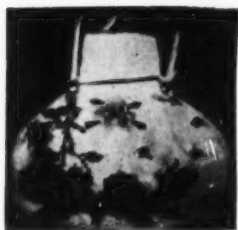
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"God gives to Borda and Borda gives to God," and we cannot know whether he actually thought he had established such pleasant reciprocal relations with the Deity or was merely grateful for his authentic "nose for ore" as miners have always called it.

There may have been some cracks in the edifice before the final crash of Borda's Taxco boom. At one time he said to Father Jimenez: "I now owe more than three hundred thousand pesos which, for me, is just the same as eighteen cents. (un real y media)" Now just what did he mean by that? At any rate, in 1763 after ten years of glorious prosperity, none of his mines were in bonanza, all the reserves had been cheerfully scattered and Borda was "impoverished." To say that a rich miner was impoverished simply meant that he did not have great piles of silver bullion in his warehouses or on the way to the mint. His mines, his reduction works, his great houses and ranches represented money that he had spent and therefore did not have! Borda repaired at once to Mexico City, talked the Archbishop out of the diamond chalice and sold it forthwith for the hundred thousand pesos mentioned above!

* * *

Now there were a number of things which an aging mine operator might have done with a hundred thousand pesos. One, not especially suitable, would have been to sink it in an old flooded and abandoned mine in the "Tierra Adentro"—the Land Within. And that is exactly what Borda did when he took over the Quebradilla Mine, far to the north in Zacatecas. Unwatering a wet mine in those days entailed buying many mules, perhaps a thousand, and running them around in batches endlessly hoisting water in bags constructed of two cow hides sewn together. These were the infamous "malacates de sangre" or hoists of blood. After a few years of this and the expenditure of perhaps a half-million pesos, the mine might be dry and operable, for good or for ill. Borda's funds did not see him through with this venture and when one of his share-miners broke into more old workings filled with water he had to abandon the effort. It is of in-



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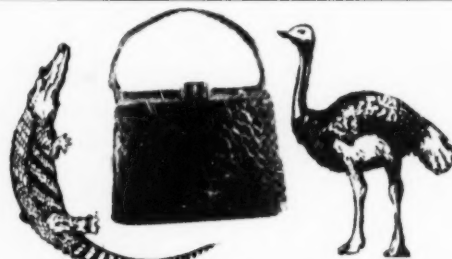
terest that better financed operators generations later found very fine bodies of silver ore in the Quebradilla mine.

The Quebradilla lost, Borda took the pitiful remnants of his fortune to the Esperanza (Hope) Pit on the Veta Grande or Great Vein of Zacatecas. This vein had already been worked on much of its length for two hundred years, but Borda nevertheless almost at once struck a bonanza which was to pay him nearly four million a year for several years. When the rich ore played out he did not go back to the Quebradilla but there was again a pensioning off of the local faithful and again a return to Taxco.

But it was not ever again to be the same Taxco, or the same Borda. An old man now, and not in good health, he regained his Taxco properties, if indeed he had ever lost them. But the zest for mining, though not for giving, had died out of him and operations proceeded slowly in comparison with those of the delirious decade before he went to Zacatecas. Claiming that Cuernavaca was better for his health than Taxco, although there is no real difference in altitude or climate between the two places, he moved there and built the Borda Gardens with its handsome residence near the Cuernavaca cathedral where Ramon Borda was officiating. Teresa, now Reverend Mother of Saint Joseph's, was not far away. There Jose de la Borda busied himself with collecting horticultural specimens, reading the works of Ignatius de Loyola and corresponding with the Pope himself. And there he died on May 30, 1778.

* * *

The death of Jose de la Borda put everyone in Taxco into a state of shock. He had been inactive for years, but he had been only a day's ride away and he had always been available for excellent advice and perhaps a little loan. Nothing was left but to give him a good send-off and this was done with a vengeance, the proceeding being described in a small booklet which is still extant. This was printed "for the stimulation and holy emulation of mining men in regard to Christian beneficence, for an example of religious moderation in the use of earthly goods, and,



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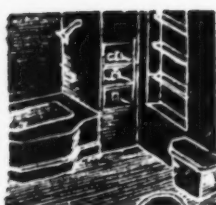
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finally, for the honor and glory of the Royal Association of Mining." Much is said in it of the beauties of Taxco, which place, it seems "is distant from the Imperial City of Mexico according to the opinion of travelers—35 leagues; according to the wise commentaries of the Mining Ordinances—30 leagues; and according to the Historian Pedro de Arellano—23 leagues." No further reference is made to the (typical) discrepancy in figures and we are left to wonder if it was the Historian's horse that made the difference.

The booklet gives a detailed description and drawings of the symbolical funeral pyre that was erected in the Taxco church. This was three and two-thirds varas high and apparently was an atrocity in its own right. It represented a Phoenix in the last stage of its peculiar life cycle, "aun Vivo," still alive but presumably about to apply the match to a disorderly nest of firewood on which it is sitting. One of a number of paintings below the Phoenix showed Borda amongst great stacks of silver bullion and coin to which he paid no wit of attention, his eyes being cast to the heavens and his lips muttering "Ego autem in te sparavi." He was all dressed in white "as a sign of his purity," presumably not that of the bullion. Father Time himself is shown at his shoulder, his sickle raised menacingly, and spouting more questionable latinity.

* * *

On one occasion the citizenry of Taxco had decided to celebrate the birthday of Our Lady of Guadalupe with some good lively bull-fights and some sprightly lay comedies. Father Jimenez took a very dim view of bull-fighting and a very lurid one of comedies, in which, he held "there burned the fires of concupiscence, Venus triumphed, and Hell boiled over." Having, no doubt been advised of this unfavorable dramatic criticism, Borda fled to the mountains during the prolonged celebrations and in another picture is shown escaping, the fires of hell arising to envelope the unfortunate bull-ring and theatre as he passed. It seems strange that it was possible to depict a celebration enjoyed by most of Taxco in such terms, but there was a good deal of give and take in such matters and it may have been felt that the citizenry having had their bull-fight the good Father was entitled to his hell-fire.

The funeral oration itself contains much detailed and doubtless justified laudation of the deceased. In it was one phrase which, if true, struck pretty deep. "Tuvo paz con sus riquezas"—He had peace with his riches! What more could he have asked?

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The Riddle of the Mayas
Continued on page 13

A lesser deity, but nevertheless a great one, was Kukulcan, called the feathered serpent god. He was supposed to have been a real man, who in time came to be worshipped as a god because of the public good which he rendered. There were also other important deities; gods of war, death, rain, and famine. The Mayas spent much time appeasing the anger of these gods. They conceived of the earth as a cube, supporting a celestial vase raised on four legs. Out of the vase grew the Tree of Life, the flowers of which were the soul of man. Their religion was dualistic—belief in a constant struggle between the powers of light and darkness. On the one hand the gods of plenty, peace and life; on the other, the gods of want, war, and destruction, were in perpetual strife over the destiny of mankind. The Mayas believed in the immortality of the soul, the good being rewarded in a heaven of material delights and the bad being condemned to a horrible hell.

The complexity of the Mayan religion led to a highly organized priesthood which directed it. Priests were the learned men, who instructed the sons of the units of time, in unlucky periods, in the ritual of fetes and ceremonies, in the administration of sacraments, in treating the sick, in history, in the art of reading, and writing hieroglyphics. They also kept genealogical records. The chief priest held an hereditary position and exerted considerable power (although he had no actual share in the government), because the lords sought his advice. He was maintained by presents from the lords and by forced contributions from the ordinary priesthood throughout the country. In addition many assistant priests, some of them women, appointed holy days, taught sciences, healed the sick, and gave the responses of the gods to petitioners. Herein lay a great deal of their power. Vacancies were filled by appointment according to the choice of the chief priest.

Mayan worship of Toltec times most frequently took the form of human sacrifice. One of the best known sacrificial rites was the tribute to the rain god. At daybreak a preliminary ceremony took place on the steps of the Temple where everyone could see. The procession then advanced with a slow, solemn, funeral march to the sacred well, called Cenote (from which the city of Chichen Itza derives its name) where prayers were offered. The Cenote was a hundred feet in diameter, and the water was seventy feet below the ground level and very deep. When rain failed to come normally, young women were chosen to be sacrificed to the rain god. If the drought was very severe, virgins were chosen to be sacrificed as the victims. At the edge of the well, the women, delicately formed and

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Oriental of feature, were hurled one by one into the black oblivion below. After them were flung jewels of gold, jade, and turquoise, and at the sound of each falling body prayers were chanted and a ritual performed.

There were other sacrificial methods of worship, most of which were very cruel and gruesome. They all resulted in the death of those sacrificed, who, by their death, became holy.

* * *

It is now generally thought that the Mayans were the first scientists on this continent; they at least possessed considerable knowledge of mathematics and astronomy, which was requisite in keeping the calendar. This was useful inasmuch as necessity required a system for keeping time and for recording religious ceremonies and other historical events.

One of the buildings still standing at Chichen Itza known as the Caracol is thought to be an astronomical observatory, probably the first in the Americas. It is a round tower, thirty-seven feet in diameter, composed of two concentric circular passages which surround a core of solid masonry. A spiral staircase leads to the top.

Buildings are classified as temples or palaces. Little is known about the uses to which they were put. Palaces are distinguished as long multi-chambered buildings, while temples are smaller buildings perched on the top of pyramids.

The building materials employed were limestone and wood. Limestone being abundant was burned to obtain lime for mortar, crushed to form rubble, and cut to use as stone masonry. Wooden beams were used only occasionally. As a rule no Maya building rose directly from the ground; all stood on a more or less elevated substructure. Palaces were too bulky to be raised very high although they were generally constructed a few feet above ground level. Some substructures were as high as seventy-eight feet. They were usually circular or pyramidal in shape, with steps extending completely around them. These mounds gave the buildings the effect of height without adding superstructure which the Mayas distrusted.



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Chichen-Itza seems to be the only Mayan city in which columns are a common feature, these being cylindrical in shape and made in sections like drums. They usually have a square capital. Some are serpent-like, representing the body of a rattlesnake. Atlantean columns, indicative of Toltec influence, are found. Interior columns were used in the construction of flat ceilings to which the Mayas resorted extensively owing to their ignorance of the properties of the true arch, the keystone arch.

The Mayan arch was formed by the gradual approach of the two opposite walls of a room, each course of masonry projecting over the one below it, until only a few feet apart. A flat capstone was placed over the top opening. This feature of Mayan architecture decidedly hampered the opportunity for creating new styles. The moldings on the buildings were elaborately painted or sculptured; there was almost no part of a building not decorated in some way. The Mayas are the only people known to have decorated the exterior corners of their buildings.

An excellent example of Mayan architecture is the so called Castillo. It is the highest structure in Yucatán, rising 78 feet above the level of the plain. The pyramid on which the Castillo stands is 195 feet long and covers an acre. It is made up of nine terraces of the masonry, each terrace elaborately panelled to relieve the effect of the monotony. Up the center of each side are stairways, thirty-seven feet wide, which have massive stone balustrades carved in the likeness of serpents. This structure has been completely restored and forms one of the most magnificent sights in the Western hemisphere.

At first sight, the details of Mayan art are strange and unintelligible and appear somewhat oriental. The Mayas are generally considered to be superior to the Egyptians and Assyrians in their knowledge of composition. They were able to draw the human body in profile and in natural attitudes. The human body, however, had only a minor interest for them, because their gods were not anthropomorphic, and their art was essentially religious. The serpent motif controlled the character of Mayan art. Parts of other creatures were added to the serpent's body such as the plume of the quetzal bird, or the teeth of the jaguar, or ornaments used by man. Finally, a human head was placed between the open jaws of the serpent, as a symbol. The human beings pictured were captives, rulers, priests, and worshippers in genre poses.

Design reached its ultimate development in hieroglyphics. The Mayas had a horror of vacant space, and the use of glyph characters gave the compositions of Mayan artists an appearance of overcrowding.

Examples of Mayan painting are found on the walls of their temples, albeit most of them have faded

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away, but many paintings are found on their pottery and in their books, the so-called codices of which there are three in existence. The predominant colors were red, blue and yellow. The subjects treated were symbolic and religious which caused Mayan art to be highly conventionalized. The Dresden codex especially exhibits great skill in the use of fine detail, graceful lines, and a fairly successful attempt to secure perspective by making black outlines around the figures.

* * *

In various places many monoliths and steles are standing today to give testimony to the amazing skill of the Mayan sculptors, whose work was monumental in character and was based on the relief. With the exception of a few small carvings full round sculpture was rare, but the depicting of figures in profile was almost perfect; perspective was excellent. They also executed striking three-quarter views.

A predominant feature was the maintenance of purity of line, a characteristic especially noticeable in the treatment of feathers. On the whole, Mayan sculpture is unemotional. There is a tranquil, immortal dignity attached to it, which makes it unmistakably individual.

The Mayan sculptor used tools of flint or obsidian. Where the artist erred or slipped, the painter came to his rescue. Bas-relief was intended only to provide a design on which masses of color were to be applied. The superimposed painting served to emphasize the details of the carving by color contrast.

The statement has been made, that there are few records of Mayan literature in existence today, and that the Spanish invaders were responsible for this loss. One of the earliest Spanish priests to arrive on the scene of the disintegrated Mayan empire was the Bishop Landa. This misguided prelate, on Mayan scrolls of deerskin and volumes of maguay cactus paper, on which were signs he could not read, and symbols he could not understand, concluded they were omens of ill-luck, signs of a diabolic nature, and he caused them, together with other records valuable to science, to be destroyed by fire in the public square. This outrage caused a great deal of disapproval at the time. The Mayas saw all the accumulated history and tradition of their race destroyed.

There remain only three books, called codices, and these are somewhat incomplete. These manuscripts are highly illuminated on long strips of paper folded like Japanese screens. The study of Mayan glyphs has led to the conclusion that the codices are not of a literary



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character, but that they treat principally of the calendar and of religious ceremonies.

Thus we see that the ancient Mayas had evolved a highly cultural civilization. They had a well organized and efficient social composition, were well versed in the sciences, had a deep religious spirit, and were superior artists.

Some day, perhaps, the key to the mystery of the strange disappearance of this advanced race may be discovered. In the meantime, students of the subject can only speculate upon possibilities. Only time and the jungle know the secret.

Fe

Continued from page 10

gave her several times the usual amount for her services.

Fe was a good worker. When she finished the dishes she insisted upon getting on her hands and knees and scrubbing the kitchen floor. We told her that she did not need to do this, that this was the work of the other maid, but she persisted.

One evening something happened and Fe was never again the same toward us. Three girls from the dancing class came to see us. We had a few drinks and practiced some of the steps in the patio. Fe stood slumped in the doorway watching us, conscious at last that our range of experience was not confined to the laughter she had shared with us.

"Who does she think she's looking at?" said one of the girls. "She's just standing there doing those dishes over and over."

"Why don't you send her home?" asked another.

A short time after that we announced to Fe that we were changing our residence to another part of the city.

In anticipation of her response we continued with affected calm, "What a pity that services are provided with the apartment; we will no longer need a criada for the dishes."

"Sí," Fe replied softly, "I suppose also it is in a colonia very distant?"

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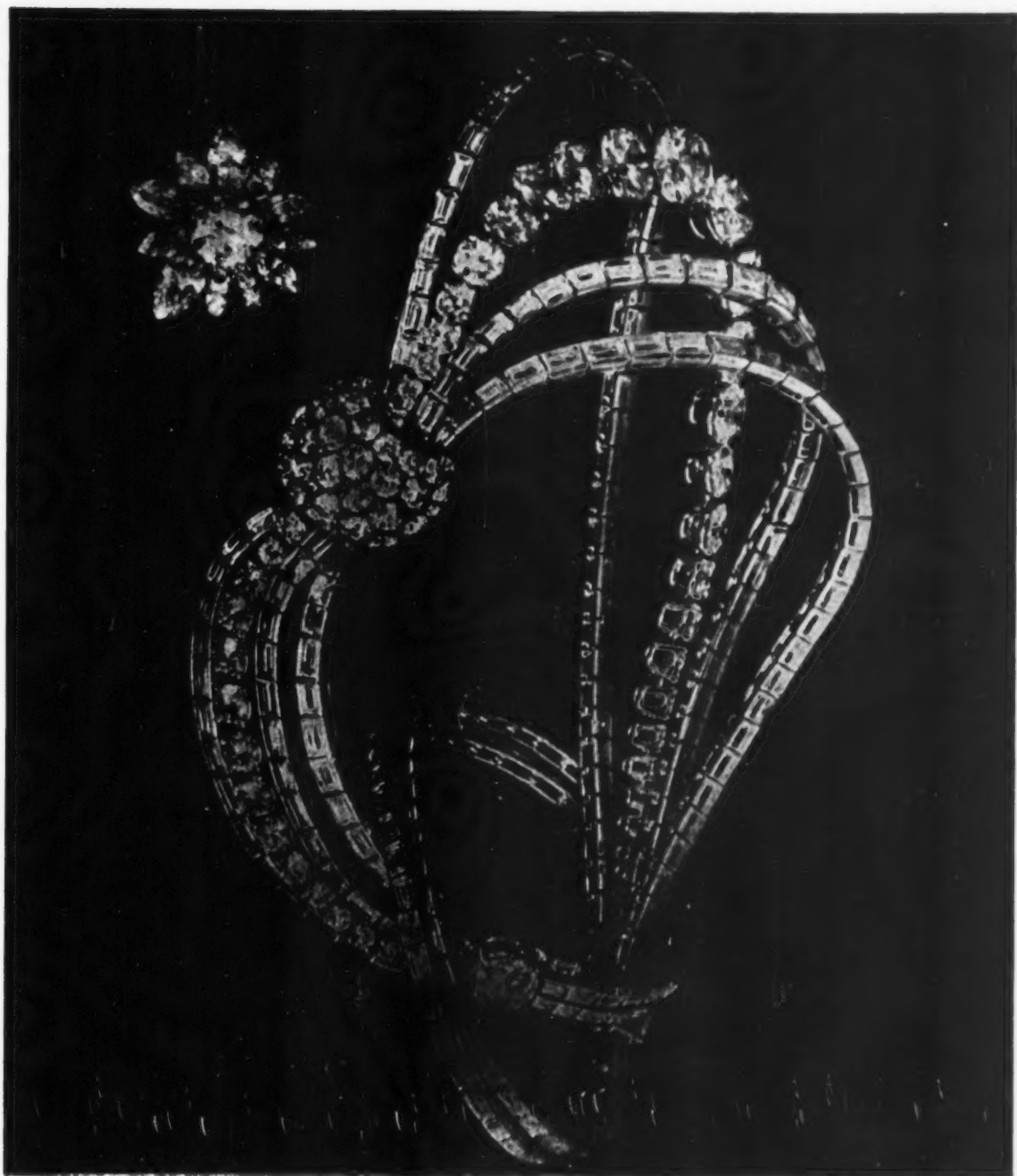
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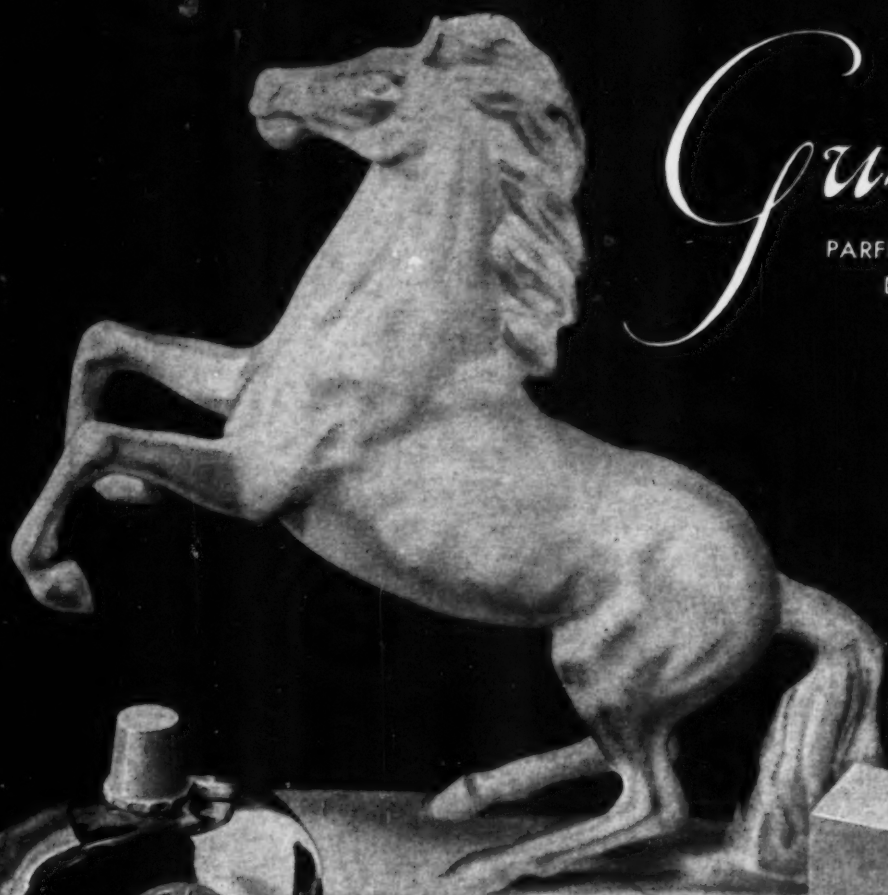


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